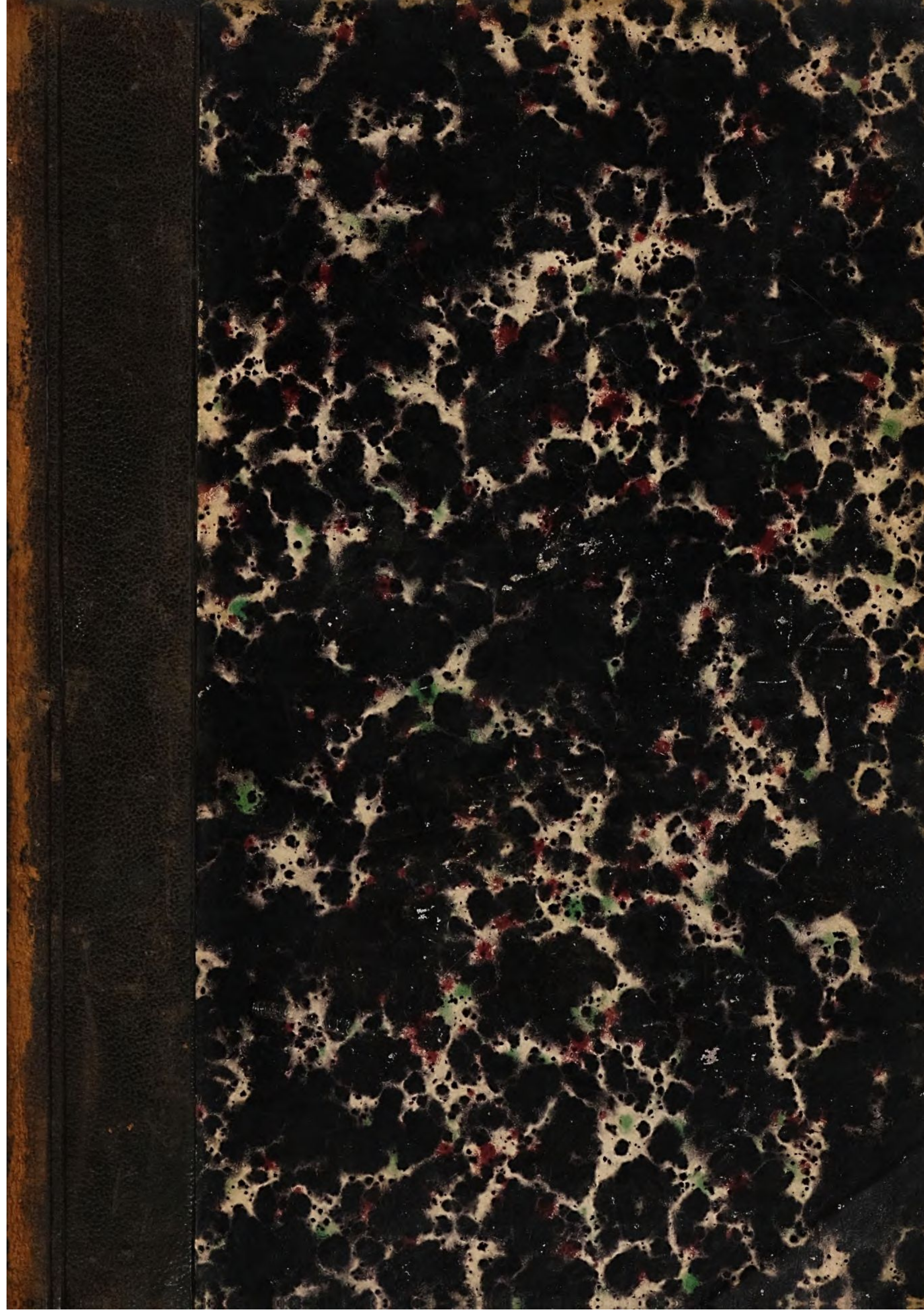




P. O. angl.

275 d

Paym

P. o. angl. 275 d

EACH VOLUME SOLD SEPARATELY.

COLLECTION
OF
BRITISH AUTHORS
TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

VOL. 2505.

A PRINCE OF THE BLOOD BY JAMES PAYN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

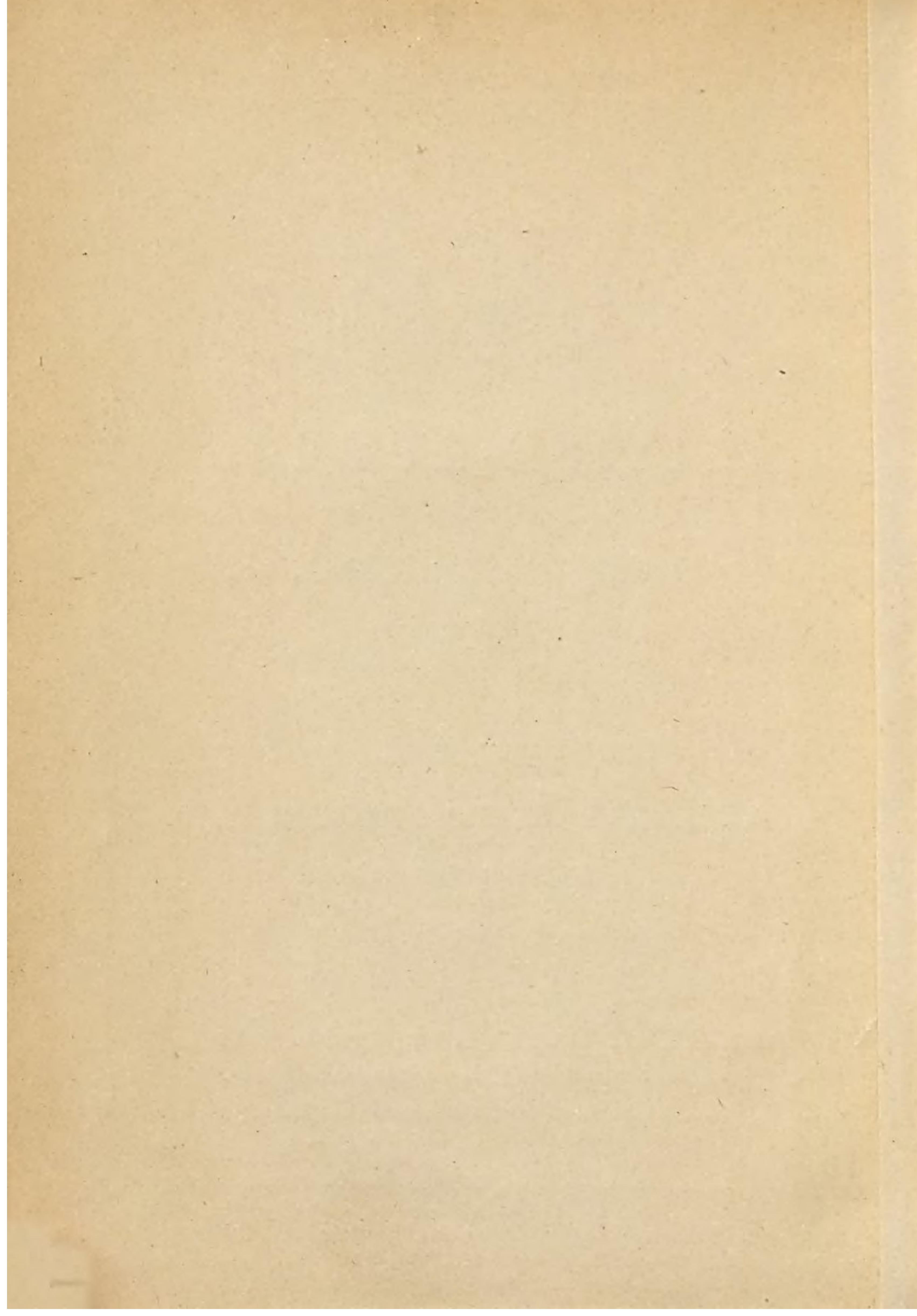
VOL. 2.

LEIPZIG: BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ.

PARIS: C. REINWALD, 15, RUE DES SAINTS PÈRES.

PARIS: THE GALIGNANI LIBRARY, 224, RUE DE RIVOLI,
AND AT NICE, 15, QUAI MASSENA.

*This Collection
is published with copyright for Continental circulation, but all
purchasers are earnestly requested not to introduce the volumes
into England or into any British Colony.*



COLLECTION
OF
BRITISH AUTHORS

TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

VOL. 2505.

A PRINCE OF THE BLOOD BY JAMES PAYN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

COLLECTION

BRITISH AUTHORS

TAUOMAT'S EDITION

VOL. 250

A PRINCE OF THE WOOD BY JAMES FAIR

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

A
PRINCE OF THE BLOOD.

A N O V E L.

BY

JAMES PAYN,

AUTHOR OF "BY PROXY," "HIGH SPIRITS," ETC.

COPYRIGHT EDITION.

I N T W O V O L U M E S.

VOL. II.

L E I P Z I G

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1888.

The Right of Translation is reserved.



CONTENTS

OF VOLUME II.

	Page
CHAPTER I. Royalties	7
— II. Master Conolly's Narrative	20
— III. Master Conolly's Narrative continued	31
— IV. To the Rescue	41
— V. Mr. Bates finds his Master	53
— VI. Let us kill the Nigger	63
— VII. The Examination	72
— VIII. Was it possible?	83
— IX. Half-Mast high	91
— X. The Blow-Pipe	101
— XI. In Hospital	109
— XII. The Execution	121
— XIII. "Yes"	132
— XIV. Family Ties	144
— XV. Ill news	155
— XVI. The Expedition	167
— XVII. The Investiture	175
— XVIII. The Derelict	183

	Page
CHAPTER XIX. Departure	194
— XX. Humiliations	203
— XXI. Burning her Boats	212
— XXII. A Mystery	218
— XXIII. The Revelation	234
— XXIV. Breaking it	247
— XXV. The Sacrifice	254
— XXVI. Aunt Sophia's Secret	261
EPILOGUE. — The fairy Godmother	268

A PRINCE OF THE BLOOD.

CHAPTER I.

ROYALTIES.

ONE morning the ladies were startled at their breakfast hour by most unusual sounds: the boatswain's whistle followed by a hum of voices and a confused uproar such as is audible in the movement of any large number of persons, even on sand. There was also a sort of hollow murmur, as though a band of horn-blowers were practising on their instruments for the first time. This latter noise continued after the others had ceased. The rampart that ran round their bay, instead of its solitary sentinel, was now lined with men, who, however, had placed themselves out of sight of the sea. It seemed only too likely that the long-expected visit from their neighbours had taken the form of an invasion.

While they sat in doubt, eager to know what had occurred, but waiting for orders from the captain, who had bidden them in any such case to

remain indoors till he should send them word what to do, an emissary arrived from him in the person of Mr. Redmayne. His Majesty of Breda, he said, had arrived, and was about to land. He had only brought five canoes with him, but a man from the look-out station had brought word that a large fleet filled with armed men was in waiting on the further side of the island. It was possible that Edith's presence might prove of service, but the matter was left entirely to her own discretion. She announced herself at once as ready to go, and accompanied by Aunt Sophia and the second mate, she at once repaired to Rescue Bay.

The spectacle that presented itself was even more striking than on the last occasion. From where the ladies stood they could see the whole camp in a posture of defence, although, beheld from without, its appearance was as peaceful as usual. The men were lying down in the batteries, and not a musket-barrel peeped above the parapet. The king's canoe, which was of great size, with a raised platform in the centre, was coming up the harbour, with two others on each side of it, the occupants of which splashed the water with their paddles, and flourished them above their heads in a graceful and dexterous fashion, while at the same time they sounded conch shells, like mermen in attendance upon their sea-king.

On the platform were two persons—one a little over middle age, of colossal size, with a dignified expression of countenance, and the other a much younger man, of slighter build, and with a face so

bright and eager, and yet, withal, so gentle that it might have belonged to a child. The absence of beard and whiskers increased this appearance of youth, so that until he rose and displayed his figure, which was almost as tall as that of his companion, and magnificently proportioned, it would have been difficult to guess his age, which was, in fact, nearly twenty-six. His hair was glossy black, and had a natural wave in it, equally removed from the crisp curl of the negro and the straight hair common to so many tribes of the Indian Archipelago.

Despite the alarm which the situation inspired in Aunt Sophia's bosom, her eye could not rest on so splendid an example of man's outward beauty without approval.

"Did you ever see such a magnificent young fellow?" she whispered in Edith's ear. "He looks like the bronze Apollo that used to stand in your poor uncle's library."

But Edith's attention was fixed on even a more attractive object, of which she had just caught sight—namely, the missing midshipman, who, hitherto obscured by the raised platform, could now be seen waving his handkerchief from the same canoe, in which the two interpreters were also seated.

"Look, look, there is Mr. Conolly!" she exclaimed excitedly.

"The dear, dear boy!" cried Aunt Sophia. "How glad I am!" and the tears stood in the eyes of both women.

At a word from the king, two men from the other canoes leapt into the water, and made signs

to the captain that he should suffer himself to be carried in their arms to the royal barge. Such a mode of locomotion—though it is called by our children “king coach”—is not very dignified, but on understanding that its object was to place him on the same platform as the king, thereby implying an equally exalted rank, he consented very readily. Then his Majesty with much complacency, like one who is exercising a new accomplishment, shook hands with the captain, and introduced him to his son, Prince Tarilam. The latter, to the astonishment of the captain, not only shook hands with him, but in very musical broken English observed, “Good morning, sir,” whereat his Majesty clapped his hands triumphantly, and gazed upon his offspring with affectionate amazement, like a father who, while recognizing the genius of his son, admits with modesty that it is not hereditary.

It must not, however, be concluded that King Taril was deficient in intelligence. No sooner had the procession come ashore than he beckoned Prince Masiric, and bade him point out to him those objects of interest, the description of which had already inflamed his curiosity. The difference between the natures of these royal brothers was as distinct as any to be observed in the most civilized communities. They were equally observant, but the one, like the men of Athens, was captivated by mere novelty, and seemed to have little sense of comparison, while the other strove to appraise the relative value of the different objects brought to his notice with reference to their use and advantage.

In after days Edith used to liken King Taril to Peter the Great, whom, save in stature, he indeed greatly resembled. He had the good of his people, and their advancement in knowledge, always at heart, and preferred it, as was subsequently amply proved, even to the ties of blood and the gratification of a domestic affection which could hardly be surpassed. Masiric was a wit and a mimic, and never suffered his high position to hamper his love of drollery; whereas the king possessed a certain dignity which never deserted him, and even under the most trying circumstances preserved him from ridicule.

Even as matters were, and on so short an acquaintance, the captain was disposed to think well of him, but the news from the look-out was too serious to be ignored, and before admitting the visitors to the camp, he demanded an explanation of it. When the question was put through the Malay, the king drew himself up with an offended air, and the colour rushed into his face. His son whispered hastily into his ear, and pointed to Conolly, whereupon his Majesty inclined his head in haughty assent. Then the midshipman, after a few words with Tarilam, addressed the captain.

"The king, sir, I am bidden to say, harbours no thoughts of treachery. He is at war with his neighbours, and therefore has been compelled to put to sea with an escort sufficient to repel any attack that might be made on him, but coming hither with all the sentiments of friendship, he thought it indelicate to alarm your people by the exhibition of

such a formidable fleet. They are at the back of the island, it is true, but they are not near enough to save his Majesty from violence, a contingency which never so much as entered his mind, and he regrets that any similar suspicion should, nevertheless, have occurred to you." These words, so uncharacteristic of Master Lewis Conolly, were delivered with a deliberation which, though caused by the difficulty of translation, gave them a certain dignity.

It was now the captain's turn to speechify, a feat in which it must be confessed he was less successful than his royal visitor.

"Well, upon my soul, it was most uncommonly considerate and deuced gentlemanly of the old gentleman," he exclaimed with enthusiasm, "and you may tell him so for me."

This eulogium, rendered, let us hope, less literally than the speech of the prince had been, was received by the monarch with great satisfaction.

"Never," he said, "has the sweet voice of Deltis sounded more grateful to my ears." The captain bowed respectfully, and in an aside with the midshipman, inquired what on earth was meant by *that*? Then Master Conolly, with purple countenance, arising from a pressing tendency to mirth, reminded him that on account of his singing he had been likened to the bird called Deltis, the only one of the feathered tribe in Breda who could favour its inhabitants with a song.

"But you do not sing in the Bredan language,

my young shaver, so how is it that these good folks understand you?"

Then the boy modestly explained that Prince Tarilam had taken a fancy to him on his first arrival on the island, and ever since had passed several hours daily in his company, acquiring from him, with the help of the interpreter, the English tongue, for which he had shown a remarkable adaptability, while in so doing he had of necessity imparted something of his own.

"But is this prince of yours and his father to be thoroughly trusted, think you?" inquired the captain, doubtfully; "for my experience as yet has been that the cleverer the savage the greater the rogue."

"There is not a more truthful or kinder-hearted man in England than Prince Tarilam, sir," answered the midshipman warmly, "and he tells me that all the good in him he owes to the teaching of the king."

"Well, well, I hope it may be so; at all events we must chance it," was the captain's conclusion; whereupon he formally invited the visitors to enter the camp.

Then, Master Lewis Conolly calling to mind that there were already two interpreters, and having something on his own account to say to somebody else, slipped away from the *cortége* and ran up to where Edith and Aunt Sophia were standing on a rock a little removed from the rest, but whence they had a good view of the whole proceedings. He was received by both with an excess of welcome,

which, if he had been two years older, would certainly not have been accorded to him. He was just at that happy epoch when nobody but yourself knows how old you are, and thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of his position. Aunt Sophia called him indifferently "Mr. Conolly" and "my dear boy," just as the matter on which they were speaking chanced to be familiar or otherwise. Edith, by way of compromise, addressed him as Lewis; but the young rascal was well aware that he was as great a favourite with one as the other.

Aunt Sophia would have had him at once recount his adventures, but this juvenile Ulysses was much too wary to run the risk of wasting their effect at such a juncture. He confined himself to speaking of the exalted individuals who were then sharing their attention with him, and might at any moment monopolize it. He pointed out to them the axes which hung from the shoulders of the king and his son, and which were the ensigns of their royal race. The handles were of ebony, and the blades of shells. Around the wrist of the former was also a bracelet of polished bone, which, though of the simplest material and construction, implied in its wearer the possession of the greatest honour as well as of the highest rank—a combination of the Victoria Cross and the Garter. It was worn also by Prince Masiric, as commander-in-chief.

"But I hope that beautiful Prince Tarilam has got the bone," observed Aunt Sophia.

"He has one, but he is too modest to wear it," returned the midshipman. "His view is that it is

the reward of merit, and that there is no merit, but only a fortunate accident, in being a king's son."

"That is a very noble motive for a savage," remarked Edith, in astonishment.

"A savage! He is no more a savage than—well—I really know no one who would not suffer by comparison with him," cried the boy, with eager enthusiasm. "See, they are about to show them what a musket can do. In spite of all I could say, the Malay would explain the use of the bullet they picked up, and since then they have been wild to hear the 'white man's thunder,' as they call it."

The visitors were now, in great expectancy, assembled round the captain and Mr. Marston, the latter of whom had a musket in his hand. He was the best shot in the ship's company,* and had therefore been intrusted with the task of impressing upon their new friends the efficacy of firearms. The thunder could be made sure of, of course, but it was essential to demonstrate the effects of the lightning. There was no lack of birds to aim at, albeit they were not of a kind known to European sportsmen; though songless, they were of the most beautiful and gorgeous colours—the men called them flying rainbows—and slid rather than flew through the warm and lustrous air. It seemed "a sin and a

* Sailors are seldom good shots. This is the reason why the exploring expeditions sent to the North Seas have suffered so much privation, and is in a great measure the reason of their ill-success. There is a sufficiency of game, if only one could bring it down, which Dr. Rae, with his company of "trappers"—Hudson's Bay men—never failed to do.

shame," as Aunt Sophia said, to kill one, and all the more so since, never having been molested by man, and not understanding his inventions, especially gunpowder, they made no great haste to get out of his reach. It would have made an *habitué* of Wimbledon smile to see the care with which the first mate handled his piece, watched his chance, and then took aim at a bird as bright and big as a peacock, that was leisurely passing over their heads; it was very like a literal rendering of the metaphor, "a barn door flying," and a barn door made more demonstrative by brilliant advertisements; but at all events he hit it, and down it came.

The flash of fire, the noise, and then the fall of the bird, created three distinct sensations in the visitors. Some stopped their ears, some shut their eyes (the better, like Mr. Justice Stareleigh, to exercise their judgment), and even the king suffered himself to be betrayed into an exclamation of astonishment. As for the emotional Masiric—prince and commander-in-chief though he was—he ran after the bird like a retriever, and picking it up, examined it with the most minute attention. How the creature could have been killed without the flame from the gun reaching him, which it clearly had not done, taxed his reason beyond his powers to explain.

Prince Tarilam turned his shapely head towards the rock on which Conolly was standing, and smiled. "You have not the least exaggerated matters," the smiler seemed to say, "but I should like to have one or two things elucidated respecting this amaz-

ing incident." The midshipman was at his side in a moment; but while the other lent his ear apparently to scientific information, his gaze was fixed upon the spot which his companion had just left. Presently Conolly also turned his eyes in the same direction, as a man always does do, sooner or later, if the object of his discourse is visible.

"I do believe the Prince has been asking questions about *us*, and not about the musket at all," ejaculated Aunt Sophia.

"Perhaps he wants to know whether it will kill people as well as birds," said Edith, drily.

"Oh, how wicked! oh, how *can* you!" exclaimed her companion; "I am sure the prince would not hurt a fly. Moreover, it can't be that, because Mr. Conolly is shaking his head, and very decidedly too."

"That may corroborate my view," persisted Edith; "he is teaching him the rudiments of the sixth commandment."

After a great deal of gesture and interpretation, during which the king maintained an air of extreme gravity and reflection, while Prince Masiric exhibited his powers of imitation of a musket-shot—just as a child presents a walking-stick and cries, "Pop, bang, fire!"—the visitors began to prepare for departure. The captain and the officers held their hands out, when, much to their astonishment and a little to their alarm, they were treated to quite another form of salutation. Each of the visitors seized his neighbour by the shoulder, the king holding the captain as in a vice, the prince seizing

the midshipman, and Masiric clutching Mr. Marston with such hearty good-will, that he left his mark on him for an hour afterwards; every host, in fact, was similarly collared by his guest.

"It is an expression of personal friendship," explained Conolly, hastily, for it was plain that the demonstration was not being accepted in the spirit in which it was offered—"the tighter they grasp you, the higher is the estimation they have formed of your character."

"His Majesty must think me an angel, then," murmured the captain, rubbing his arms. He smiled, however, with much complacency, as did all the rest, as in duty bound. It was, moreover, a relief to them to find that this tenacious treatment, which suggested perpetual imprisonment, had, after all, a friendly aim.

Then, amid blowing of conch shells and splashing of paddles, the king and his suite departed. At the mouth of the harbour they delayed a little, while at a given signal the fleet, consisting of more than a hundred canoes, came swiftly up from below the island, and took their station behind the royal barge, when the whole *cortége* left for home. It was a splendid sight, and a method of royal conveyance at least as imposing as the gilt carriage and eight cream-coloured horses used on state occasions in our own country.

The two ladies would certainly not have grudged it their admiration, but for a circumstance which at the moment drew their attention to another quarter.

"See, Mr. Conolly has not gone," cried Edith,

eagerly, who in the confusion and crowd upon the beach had not hitherto recognized the fact that the midshipman had been left behind. "How glad I am they have not taken him back with them! Though he *has* such a belief in their good-will, I much prefer to see him left with us."

"They have left other persons behind them too," exclaimed Aunt Sophia, excitedly; "yes, they certainly have. The prince himself, with two of his people, no doubt as hostages and to show that their intentions are honourable. Now, I call that very nice of them. The idea of having such a Prince Charming for our guest is delightful. And, only look, I protest that that dear boy, who knows how I dote on royalty, is bringing him to talk with us. My dear Edith, I feel all in a flutter."

CHAPTER II.

MASTER CONOLLY'S NARRATIVE.

As the midshipman and the young Prince of Breda approached the ladies, they could not help observing the contrast between them, which, indeed, considering that they were both favourable types, was as great as contrast could be. The one was a handsome English boy, fresh-coloured and blue-eyed, with a roguish drollery in his face that even the presence of authority could only mitigate, and which the nature of the undertaking he had now on hand intensified to an unusual degree. The prince, on the other hand, whose comeliness was of quite another kind, and whose grace of form suggested some faultless statue, wore an expression of sedateness altogether alien to his years. With this, however, was mingled no touch of austerity; indeed, it was the tenderness of his looks, joined to a certain worshipful awe as he drew near the young lady, which was trying Master Lewis Conolly's gravity to the utmost.

"The Prince Tarilam wishes to have the honour of your acquaintance, ladies," he observed sedately.

The ladies bowed and held out their hands, which, to their astonishment, he raised respectfully

to his lips. No courtier could have surpassed the grace and ease of it, only he saluted the younger lady first, and perhaps retained her hand a second or two longer.

"Welcome," he said, "to Faybur, and may you be happy with us." The speech, though so brief, was evidently rehearsed beforehand, and he looked at the midshipman when he had uttered it with the simplicity of a child who seeks approval from his teacher.

"Quite right," exclaimed Conolly, encouragingly. Then, in lower and more rapid tones, he added, "I was priming his Royal Highness with a lot of pretty speeches as we came along in the canoe, and that is the one he selected. He is so jolly green that I had not the heart to keep up the illusion that you were the goddess of flowers; but he wishes me to remark that you certainly *are* a flower, Miss Edith, for all that, and the very fairest he has ever set eyes on."

Edith blushed and smiled, and deprecatingly shook her head.

"It is no use denying it like that," observed the midshipman, gravely, after a brief conference with his companion; "his Royal Highness says he only made a mistake in the kind of flower; at first he was under the impression that you were a rose, but he perceives now by the movement of your head that you are a lily of the valley."

"You bold, bad boy," cried Aunt Sophia, "I am quite sure the prince has been saying nothing of the kind."

At which Edith smiled outright, the midshipman burst into uproarious laughter, and Tarilam laughed so musically that it seemed astonishing that so gentle a sound could proceed from such a formidable frame. There was no sense of fun in it, of course, yet it was perfectly natural and genuine, for it arose from sympathy, just as the countenance of any kindly-disposed person reflects the spectacle of happiness in others.

"The prince is to be the captain's guest here for some time, and will share his quarters," continued Conolly; "as his host will be occupied with his duties, his Royal Highness hopes that he may be permitted to call occasionally in Ladies' Bay, and cultivate your acquaintance. He would like some of your leisure time to be spent in teaching him reading, writing, arithmetic, and the use of the globes."

"Mr. Conolly," said Edith, severely, "it is neither good taste nor good manners to make fun of any guest, especially of one who, from ignorance of our language, is necessarily at your mercy."

"Ten thousand pardons, Miss Edith; you don't know what a beast I seem to myself, now you have held the looking-glass up to me," returned the midshipman; "I will never offend again." His penitence was so earnest as well as so abject, that Edith could not but forgive him; she knew that Master Conolly's crime went no further than in permitting his high spirits to run away with him, whereas they required a tight hand.

"Now, tell me truly what the prince does say," she answered.

"Well, I have told him that we have all duties to do here, except you ladies, and that I am sure, when we are not at leisure to look after him, you will be so good as to do so a little; and especially that you will help him to learn English, which it is his great desire to master; indeed, I have not exaggerated matters, Miss Edith, about his having the highest regard for you; and I am sure" (this in a hasty parenthesis) "for your aunt also; and in spite of all his strange surroundings, you will find Prince Tarilam to be a thorough gentleman."

"We are quite sure of that," said Aunt Sophia, an opinion evoked not less from the lad's own evident conviction, than from the demeanour of the prince himself. His position was an exceptionally trying one, something like that of the gentleman in the figure "Pastorelle" in the old quadrille, who had the utmost difficulty, while dancing alone opposite two ladies and another man, not to look like a fool; nay, Tarilam had not even the relief of movement, but in stillness and silence had to endure the consciousness of being talked about by his three companions without understanding one word they said. Yet he never on the one hand betrayed a trace of awkwardness, nor on the other, of a too great audacity, but remained the personification of unembarrassed ease. His expression reminded one of those admirable specimens of gentleness among the deaf and dumb, for whom as they listen in vain, but with a smile of patient intelligence to the conversation

of their more favoured fellow-creatures, few fail to feel a touch of tenderness.

For the present, his patience was put to no further test, for the captain here sent to say that his guest's quarters were ready for his inspection, so, with a grace and courtesy seldom seen out of a minuet, he took his leave.

"That is the best bred young man that ever I saw," was Aunt Sophia's remark as soon as he got out of earshot (though *that* didn't matter much), "and I do hope we shall see a great deal of him." As Edith took no notice of this aspiration, it may at least be supposed that she had no objection to offer to it. "I wonder where he gets his clothes from?" continued Aunt Sophia, naïvely.

At this, both of her companions burst out laughing. "If we are to teach him English, you will have an excellent opportunity of asking him that question, Sophy," observed Edith.

"But, my dear child, you mistake me; I don't want to know who is his tailor, but where the material comes from and what it is, which, as an attire, becomes him so admirably."

"I can tell you all about that, ladies," said the midshipman, demurely, "not, of course, now, but some day when you may happen to ask me to dinner, in order to have the whole story of my adventures in Amrac."

Their curiosity to learn that matter was, as the young rogue knew, extreme, and he received his invitation for that very day accordingly. It was not the first time that he had partaken of the

hospitality of the tenants of Ladies' Bay, whose house, indeed, save that of the captain, was the only one of dimensions sufficient for the entertainment of guests, and he not only esteemed the honour very highly, but thoroughly appreciated the superiority of the food he got there over that of the midshipmen's mess. The freshest fish that could be caught, the daintiest bird that could be snared, was always reserved for the ladies' table.

It was, therefore, with the sense of having well dined, and of being made much of, and of having deserved it, that the young gentleman proceeded that afternoon to narrate his story to his hostesses, or rather—for he was somewhat in the position of Canning's knife-grinder, as to "story"—to allow what he had to tell to be elicited from him by the gentle pressure of inquiry.

"In the very first place," observed Aunt Sophy, "we are wild to know what the prince was saying about us before you introduced him, and what was the proposition at which you shook your head so positively?"

"It is the Amrac custom, Miss Norbury, for every one to choose for himself a personal friend, a ceremony which you saw take place on the beach just now; and he who is chosen becomes as a brother, to be loved, cherished, and protected by the other to his life's end; and this honour the Prince Tarilam proposed to himself to confer upon *you*."

"Upon *me*?" exclaimed Aunt Sophia. "Why, goodness gracious, this is the first time the man has ever set eyes upon me!"

"Once is surely quite enough, madam," returned the midshipman, demurely, "for any man to be impressed with your merits, only as this ceremony involved some physical pain, and was also liable to misconstruction, I persuaded him to perform it by proxy."

"Then who is to take care of my niece?" inquired Aunt Sophia, with a severity she found it difficult to assume, for the compliment that had been paid her was not displeasing.

"Miss Edith, madam, has been bespoken as a sister by Majuba."

"And who on earth is Majuba?"

"To be sure—that is because you would not let me begin at the beginning. Majuba is the only daughter of King Taril, a most lovely young woman, and as good, I do assure you, as she is beautiful."

"You seem to have a very great insight into character, young gentleman," said Aunt Sophia. "May I ask if you stood proxy for Edith as you did for me, and were pinched by this excellent young person in the shoulder?"

"She did just nip me with her finger and thumb," stammered the young gentleman; "it was like being vaccinated, only it seemed shorter."

"I am afraid it was contagion, however, that you received from it, and not protection," observed Aunt Sophia, with uplifted finger. "Mr. Redmayne was certainly wrong, Edie, when he told us that no midshipman had been ever seen to blush."

"Mr. Redmayne has made up for it since he

became a mate, by blushing whenever a lady speaks to him," returned Master Conolly, contemptuously.

"And how old is this Princess Majuba?" inquired Edith, smiling in spite of herself.

"She is just four years younger than Prince Tarilam, and very like him," replied the midshipman. "She was uncommonly interested in you both, and would have come here to-day, but that it is contrary to etiquette for a woman to accompany the king on a visit of ceremony."

"But tell us all about everything in its proper order," interrupted Aunt Sophia, impatiently; "do let us persuade you—if only temporarily—to drop Majuba."

Master Conolly cast at Aunt Sophia a look of deep reproach—she had always hitherto been his best friend, and this desertion, and especially the rallying of him in the presence of Edith, wounded him to the quick—and then commenced as follows:—

"When the canoe in which I went away approached Amrac, there was a great surf, so that it seemed impossible to land; but somehow the thing was done, and I found myself literally high and dry, for I was carried at once upon men's shoulders, and in the midst of a great concourse of people, to the king's house. I offered him the presents sent by the captain, which he accepted very graciously, and at once began to eat the sweet biscuits and the tea. On the other hand, I was regaled with something like toffee, only very dry and hard, on a tortoise-shell dish; the Malay told me it was

the highest compliment that could be conferred upon me, so I pretended to enjoy it, while the scoundrel himself was eating the most excellent cray-fish and dried turtle, served on plantain leaves.

"I did my best to pretend to like it, but it was hard work, for I was very hungry. Every one else who was eating what pleased him, pretended to look on me with envy, nor did the king himself—though he could hardly be enjoying the dried tea leaves—observe that I was not worthy of so much honour; but directly the prince entered the room, he seemed to understand the whole situation at a glance. He bade me, through the interpreter, put the precious fragment of hard-bake aside as if for future use, and then caused me to be served with more agreeable, if more humble, food.

"It struck one at once, somehow, that here was an intelligent and independent-minded fellow, not in the least affected by forms and ceremonies. Though his manner to his father was full of respect and duty, it seemed to me that the king looked up to him as to a superior mind. At all events, he did what he liked with everybody else. After the meal was over, he took me into an adjoining room and introduced me to his sister, the princess."

"How was she dressed?" inquired Aunt Sophia.

"In white raiment, like an angel. Her attire was, in fact, of the same material as that you saw worn by the prince, only much fuller and longer; it is made of tappa, a substance beaten out of the bark of a sort of mulberry tree. Every one wears it, and it is always spotless; but washing is extremely

cheap in Breda. The interpreters were not admitted to the princess's presence; so, though she and her brother talked together of course, all my intercourse with her was by signs. Yet, you have no idea how well we got on together."

"Indeed we have a very good idea," said Edith, laughing.

"It is all very well to laugh," continued the midshipman, pretending not to understand her, "but though I felt quite safe in the company of these two charming persons, I had no such confidence in the people at large, and I especially mistrusted the Malay."

"We have not yet done with your princess," observed Aunt Sophia, severely; "your interview seems to have been very short. Did nothing else occur than what you have told us?"

"There was a little dance which I forgot to mention," said Master Conolly, with simplicity.

"Oh, indeed, you danced with this young woman, did you?"

"With the princess? Certainly not, madam. But, by way of entertaining me, as I suppose, a number of young ladies, her handmaidens, were summoned, and executed what you might call a ballet."

"But what might *you* call it, sir," inquired Aunt Sophia. "*Was* it a ballet?"

"I rather think it was," confessed the youth, demurely. "They were all dressed in flowers, and very pretty."

"Very pretty," repeated Aunt Sophia, not like an echo, but severely.

"I mean the flowers were very pretty," explained the young gentleman. "But I was very tired and sleepy and hardly looked at anything."

"He means he had no eyes for any one else but the Princess Majuba," observed Edith, smiling.

"I don't know what he means," said Aunt Sophia; "I only know he ought never to have gone to Amrac without somebody to take care of him. Do you mean to say, sir, that you were not asked to sing?"

"Oh, yes, I had forgotten that. The princess—I mean the prince—kept saying 'Deltis, Deltis,' and so I did sing her a song."

"'Rule Britannia,' I dare say," said Aunt Sophia, scornfully; "nothing of a sentimental character, of course."

"Oh, no, I sang her an horticultural song, 'The Last Rose of Summer,' I think it was."

"He has already acquired all the duplicity of the savage," observed Aunt Sophia, lifting up her hands. "Well, *go on*, sir."

CHAPTER III.

MASTER CONOLLY'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

"PRESENTLY I began to yawn, so that the prince burst out laughing, and gave me in charge to one of his male attendants, who showed me where I was to sleep. This was a large room in another house, with a couple of fires in it, for the nights in Amrac are much colder than in Breda. They gave me a mat to lie upon, and another to draw over me, and a block of wood for a pillow. I should have slept soundly enough on it, but for the strangeness of the place, and for the being away from everybody I knew."

"Poor fellow," exclaimed the two ladies, simultaneously; for under the mask of raillery and pretended severity, Aunt Sophia felt at least as tenderly for the boy as Edith.

"Then, in the middle of the night, eight men came in and made up the fires, preparatory, as I thought, to roasting me at one of them, but it was only, as it turned out, an excess of civility and attention, and soon after daybreak they brought me yams and cocoa-nuts and some turtle soup for breakfast, which I partook of in the presence of about five hundred men and women, all sitting round me

in perfect silence, and waiting, as the interpreter presently told me, for a song.

"The people at large seemed to care for nothing but singing and flowers, and though very kind and pleasant, could not understand that one could not sing for ever, even on turtle soup. I was so tired and weary, that when the king came down and wanted more singing, I had hardly strength to comply with his request, but made signs that I wanted to return to Faybur to recover my voice. Whereupon he pointed up to the trees, and blew strongly with his mouth; and, to indicate what would happen in such weather if the canoes should venture out, he joined his hands together, with the palms upwards, and turning them the reverse way, signified that they would upset. Then he said, 'Deltis,' indicating how I should employ the time, for a month or two, till the fair weather set in, and I, on my part, resolutely shut my mouth and shook my head.

"Then the prince came full of intelligence and consideration, and smiles that seemed to take disappointment away from everybody, and took me by the hand to his own house.

"There I found the two interpreters, our own and the Malay, from the latter of whom the prince had already learnt a few words of English, and we set to work to make ourselves intelligible to one another. Never did I see so quick a scholar. In less than a week he knew at least three times as much of my language as I did of his, and long before I came away we dispensed with the interpreter altogether. The king, on the other hand, was rather

a dance at it, he said he was too old a dog to learn new tricks."

"My dear Mr. Conolly, he surely never said *that*," expostulated Edith.

"No, no, it was what he would have said, I mean, if he could have said anything; but the prince and I got on famously."

"And Majuba?" demanded Aunt Sophia, inexorably; "was she not also a pupil?"

"To be sure, I had forgotten that; when I said that the prince was the quickest scholar I had ever seen, I should have said the quickest male scholar; the princess beat him into fits."

"What imagery!" murmured Aunt Sophia. "How true it is that poetry is the natural language of love! And when you had taught this peerless young person to talk, may I ask what it was you talked about?"

"I think you are rather hard upon our young friend, Sophy," remonstrated Edith. "Remember, Mr. Conolly, that you are not obliged to criminate yourself, if you find any difficulty in replying to that question."

"I find none at all," retorted the young gentleman, audaciously; "I talked to the princess about *you*. She was immensely interested, and I told her everything."

"About *me*?" exclaimed Edith; her tone was not only one of surprise, but of annoyance.

"All about both of you," he answered hurriedly, "how you had embarked on board ship for India,

and were shipwrecked, and were now in Breda all alone."

"Oh, I see," cried Edith, with an air of ill-concealed relief; "and she was kind and sympathizing, was she?"

"She was, indeed; she would have come to you at once, as I have said, if etiquette had permitted it."

"You do not seem to have been much inconvenienced by etiquette yourself," observed Aunt Sophia, drily.

"Was I not? Wait till the king delights to honour *you*, madam (as I am sure he will), and gives you hard-bake," replied the youth innocently. "As for the princess, she will be here—weather permitting—to-morrow or the next day."

"Faybur has, doubtless, new attractions for her, which it had not before," remarked Aunt Sophia, viciously.

"Yes, madam," was the demure rejoinder, "she cannot bear being separated from her only brother."

"You have said that you mistrusted the Malay," observed Edith, after a pause. "Why was that?"

"Well, I can hardly say; it is, perhaps, only a case of 'I do not like thee, Dr. Fell,' but still I found out one thing from our own interpreter during my first day at Breda, that it was not on that island, as he told us, on which the Malay had been shipwrecked, but on Amrac, and that the people there did not kill him, but suffered him to escape to Breda, which is suspicious, as showing a fellow-feeling with the refugee."

"The Amrac folks are very wicked, I suppose, then?"

"A pack of murderers, nothing less."

"What a partisan our young friend has become," observed Aunt Sophia. "I dare say if the truth were known, there are princes and princesses in Amrac quite as respectable—to say the least of it—as in Breda."

Master Conolly shook his head, and in tones much more serious than he had hitherto used, assured his companions that this was not the case. "From Amrac," he said, "there is everything to fear, a nation delighting in bloodshed, and because no treaty can bind them, always at war with their neighbours."

"And they might come over here some fine day," observed Aunt Sophia, apprehensively.

"Well, any fine day—for they are not such good sailors as the Breda folks. Yes. There is no fear, however, but that we shall be able to give a good account of them," said the midshipman, drawing himself up to his full five feet.

Here a messenger came from the captain to summon Mr. Conolly, to relieve him from his duties for an hour or two in the entertainment of the prince; whereupon he vanished at once.

"Poor Captain Head finds conversation with his Royal Highness a little difficult, no doubt," observed Aunt Sophia.

"I should hardly think that, after Mr. Conolly's account of his proficiency in English; he must have

understood us, I fancy, a great deal better than we thought he did."

"Gracious goodness! Do you really think so, Edith? What a horrible notion! What was that we said about his clothes?"

"You mean what was that *you* said?" returned Edith, laughing.

"Dear, dear! it makes one quite hot to think of it! What a mischievous monkey that boy is."

The afternoon, though fine as usual, was somewhat oppressive, and when it was so it was the custom of the ladies to bathe in a sheltered cove at the extremity of the little bay. It was a reflection they had often made, that though their whole wardrobe had been safely landed, the articles which they had heretofore been accustomed to set most store by, such as their dinner and ball dresses, were now utterly useless, while their more homely garments were become of great value; of these none were more useful than their bathing gear, which enabled them to take a bath of the most enjoyable kind whenever they felt inclined for it. Edith was a tolerable proficient in natation, and, under the new conditions of the sea and air and sand, enjoyed it as she had never done before, while her aunt watched her with envy from the shallows. Beside the five senses, there are various channels for the influx of human happiness, not so common to all, but which, nevertheless, many foolishly despise or ignore, who have it in their power to use them. One of these is the art of swimming, the neglect of which in an age of so-called "culture" and educa-

tion, and one which prides itself on squeezing all that is pleasant out of life to the last drop, both for man and woman, is inexplicably neglected by the latter. At the date of our story, this was of course still more the case. It had been her father's custom, however—itself a rare one at the time—to spend at least a month every year by the sea-side, and there Edith had acquired this accomplishment. Enjoyable as she had found it at Ramsgate and Dover, it was ten times more so at Breda; where the buoyancy of the sea, the purity of the air, the brilliancy of the sky, and the exquisite beauty of the surrounding scenery, joined to that forgetfulness of trouble produced by the exercise itself, made her in truth more happy when in the water than she ever felt out of it.

Aunt Sophia splashed about well within her depth, with a much inferior sense of pleasure, and with a certain groundless apprehension on her niece's account, such as a hen might feel who has hatched a duckling. She was constantly entreating her niece not to swim so far out, as though increased depth meant increased danger, and I am afraid that Edith took some malicious pleasure—as experts will do under such circumstances—in arousing her fears. On the present occasion, she was disporting herself as usual, some distance from the shore, when a cry from Aunt Sophia reached her. She laughingly replied that she was all right, and, to prove it, took another stroke or two out to sea. Then the cry was repeated, and this time it struck her that there was something unusual in it. It was

not the warning note of apprehension, but the shrill treble of agonized alarm. She looked back and beheld her companion standing on the shore, and pointing with a vehemence that also somehow signified despair, to some object between herself and the swimmer.

Edith's eyes followed the direction of her gaze, saw something twinkle in the water, and then disappear. She knew it at once for what it was, for on board ship she had seen it many times, and never—though herself in perfect safety—without a shudder of fear; it was the brown fin of a shark.

Fear seized her soul, and for a moment so paralyzed her limbs that she was in imminent danger of sinking: if she could have sunk, and been drowned before the creature came up with her, she felt that it would have been well indeed. It was not so long ago that she had felt that death in any form would have been welcome to her; but that hopeless mood had of late been passing away, and at no time, indeed, could she have confronted such a form of death as *this* without horror and aversion. The most miserable among us who yearns to be "anywhere, anywhere out of the world," would shrink from such a gate of exit. Not even unconsciousness, which generally mitigates a shock of horror so intense and sudden, stepped in to her relief. The vitality, that for an instant had deserted her frame, returned to it, and with it an only too accurate understanding of her helpless position. The shark was between her and the shore. No boat could possibly reach her as soon as it, and in-

deed no man, if man could be found to run for her sake upon certain death. The sentry on the rampart had, indeed, as usual been withdrawn upon the ladies expressing their intention of bathing, and no one apparently was in earshot of her aunt's passionate cries for help.

All this she took in at a glance, as it were mechanically, but her whole power of thought was concentrated on her unseen enemy. We are told that when sudden death lays hold upon us—as when, for example, those lose consciousness who are about to drown—that a vision of our past sweeps through the mind, and we seem to live our life again at the very moment of quitting it; but this was not the case with Edith Norbury. Her eyes as she swam desperately shoreward, were fixed with agonized intentness on the sea, and her soul was monopolized by the thought of the hateful creature that was lying in wait therein to rend her. When she should see that brown fin rise again, it would be the sign, she knew, that death in its most appalling form was close upon her.

At present it was probable that the shark was not aware of her proximity; he had, indeed, been swimming close in shore, and had snapped at that not unconscious trifle Aunt Sophia, just as she ran out of his reach; but it was to the last degree unlikely that having found bathers about, he would not be looking for more. Still there was hope—without which she could not have swum a stroke—that he might have gone elsewhere.

Edith positively was not fifty yards from the

sandy beach, and was straining every nerve to reach it, when something close beside her rose out of the water, and sideways with a gleaming flash, made at her; then she uttered one despairing shriek and knew no more.

CHAPTER IV.

TO THE RESCUE.

PRINCE TARILAM had been right royally received by Captain Head; entertained with the choicest pickled meats and other European delicacies, including champagne—which he had declined to swallow in an effervescing state upon the ground that living things were neither drunk nor eaten in Breda—and welcomed as hospitably as guest could be; but conversation had flagged between his host and him. He could not use his newly-acquired tongue with others with the same freedom as with Conolly, who understood his peculiar difficulties with it, and could help him out of them. He was diffident, too, as some of us, though not naturally shy, are apt to be when talking to a Frenchman who is not our tutor; and everything was so new and strange that the attention which it was so necessary to pay to his companion's speech was constantly being diverted elsewhere. So when he had delivered certain messages from the king, full of amity and concord, and these had been reciprocated, both parties felt their conversational powers on the wane.

“I can't be talking to this blessed prince all day

about the greatness and goodness of his father," was the captain's impatient reflection, "so I'll get young Conolly to take him off my hands."

At the mention of the midshipman, the prince brightened up at once, as the face of the after-dinner guest is gladdened by the offer of an unexpected cigar, and the proposal that his young friend should take him round the camp was accepted with pleasure. Except that the summons withdrew him from the society of the ladies, the midshipman was equally pleased to be his cicerone.

There are few things more pleasant than to introduce a person, for whom one has a liking, to objects of interest, which, though familiar to ourselves, are unknown to them; it is something like the sensation of telling an excellent but well-known joke to a new audience. Everything in the prince's eyes was novel and amazing, down to the very grindstone on which the men's swords were sharpened. The glitter of their bayonets—for he had never seen any polished body, or the action of light upon it—delighted him. A small hatchet which Conolly gave him, and which he compared with his own axe of shell with quite a piteous sense of its inferiority, filled him with gratitude. His observation was ceaseless, and so keen, and even deep, that a superficial explanation did not serve his turn, and it was not always easy to satisfy his curiosity. Like Columbus, he had discovered a new world, but, unlike him, one much more marvellous and in a far higher stage of civilization than the one with which he was familiar.

Their walk extended beyond the camp, to the outworks of Ladies' Bay. "Why is there no sentinel here, as elsewhere," inquired the prince, whose quick eye noticed what was absent as well as what was present. Conolly explained to him, that in order to afford greater privacy, the sentry was withdrawn when the ladies were bathing.

"Bathing!" he cried in his own dialect. "Are they bathing there?" From his tone, which was one of alarm, Conolly gathered there was something seriously amiss, but knew not what. "Tetmil, tetmil," exclaimed Tarilam excitedly. Conolly knew that this was the term in Breda for a shark, and his heart sank within him. Before he could reply, an agonized shriek broke from the shore, where, a quarter of a mile away, he suddenly caught sight of a figure in blue serge, wildly gesticulating. The next instant he was alone.

Literally like an arrow from a bow, Tarilam had left his side, and was flying along the sands with a speed that almost outstripped the power of vision. Master Lewis Conolly was a good runner, and to leap from the rampart and follow his late companion was the work of a moment, but he might as well have matched himself against the wind. Aunt Sophia, almost out of her mind with terror, was conscious only of something white flashing by her like a gigantic gull, and plunging into the sea. In truth, there was need of speed beyond what lies in the thews and sinews of ordinary men. Edith's shriek, and, perhaps, some mechanical beating of her arm through excessive terror, had momentarily

frightened the shark—the most cowardly of all predatory creatures—and caused it to miss its aim; when it turned to come at her again, with gleaming teeth and ravening maw, it found a less helpless foe.

Almost as much at home in water as on land, and not unused to such combats, Tarilam awaited its rush, and at the moment of impact swerved aside, and buried his hatchet in the creature's head with a force that needed no second blow. Then, bearing up Edith's inanimate form with his left arm, and oaring himself with the other to the shore, he laid her at Aunt Sophia's feet, with the dumb delight of a retriever.

The whole affair had happened within so short a space that Conolly only just reached the spot in time to aid in restoring the girl to consciousness, a task to which Miss Norbury alone would have been quite unequal. Her nerves had by no means recovered the frightful shock to which they had been subjected, and, indeed, the spectacle of her niece's preserver, whose white garment was covered with blood from his dead foe, was not of a nature to restore them. Either fearing the effects of his appearance upon her, or by a delicate intuition recognizing that his further services could just then be dispensed with, the prince quietly re-entered the water, and busied himself in removing the stains of combat from his apparel.

Edith came to herself with a shudder, and looked about her like one who is doubtful of her own

identity; the truth was she could not understand, with the recollection of the horrible fate that had seemed so certain and so imminent, how it had come to pass that she was still in life and unharmed.

"That dear prince has saved you," sobbed Aunt Sophia, replying to her wondering look. "He has the swiftness of a deer and the courage of a lion; no other human being could have done it."

"That is quite true," observed the young midshipman sorrowfully. "I was of no use at all."

Edith held out her hand and smiled feebly. "I am sure you did what you could," she murmured.

"Oh, yes, I ran like a snail," he answered sorrowfully; "now, perhaps, you will believe what I told you ladies of Prince Tarilam. There are very few princes at home, I fancy, who would run like that to meet a shark in his native element."

It might have been rejoined with some reason that such feats were out of the line of European princes, but neither lady was in the humour to throw cold water on the boy's enthusiasm, nor to detract, however indirectly, from the merits of his hero.

"Tell me how it all happened," cried Edith, her eyes wandering gratefully to her unconscious preserver.

Master Conolly obeyed, describing with no little dramatic force, because with perfect naturalness, what had taken place; then perceiving that Edith was greatly moved, and apparently distressed by

the narrative, he added with an attempt at jocularitv, "I do hope that in future you ladies will be more careful where you bathe."

"Bathe!" cried Aunt Sophia, vehemently, "I doubt whether I shall ever dare again even to wash. The creature came up to within a foot of me, my dear Edie, before it went off to you." Edith shuddered again, then murmured with emotion,

"How can I ever tell him what I owe him?"

"It is unnecessary," observed the midshipman confidently. "One look of thanks, if I know him, will tell him all you feel. He thinks much less of what he has done, believe me, than we think of it. What is distressing him just now, on the other hand, is a matter that you will only smile at. Though the people of Breda are almost amphibious, they dislike above all things getting wet. A shower of rain, which fortunately seldom occurs, will keep the whole nation within-doors, and the prince, I will wager, was much less concerned about the shark than about getting his clothes wet in killing him."

As Conolly completed his explanation, Tarilam, his attire dried in the soft air and sunshine, and freed from the stains of combat, came up with a quiet smile of congratulation.

"I hope miss is not much worse," he said; a sentence which it is probable was not altogether extempore; indeed, he had been repeating it to himself for some time by the sea-shore, like Demosthenes, before he ventured upon its deliverance in public.

"I should have been *dead* but for your timely aid," said Edith, holding out her hand, which Tarilam took with great respect, and bowed over like a bronze Chesterfield. "I shall never forget that I owe you my life, prince."

"I did nothing," said Tarilam, with a disclaiming wave of the hand. "Thanks to my friend here"—he touched the boy lightly on the shoulder—"who gave me this hatchet, it was very small work; if Deltis" (a word he pronounced with extraordinary sweetness) "could have run as fast, he would have done as well."

He spoke slowly and with difficulty, but in the gentlest tone; it was evident, by the expression of his face, that he wished the young fellow to share whatever honour was to be derived from the late proceedings.

"That is a very big 'if,'" observed the midshipman. "I don't know what I should have done, even had I come up in time and been in your place. I am afraid the shark would have eaten both me and the young lady."

Edith shuddered. The prince perceived it, and at once assumed a tone of indifference. "In Breda we think nothing of tetmils," he said, "there are one, two, three—a thousand of them everywhere."

"That only makes it worse," observed Aunt Sophia.

"What he means," explained Conolly slyly, "is that your first shark always makes an impression, sometimes a very serious one."

"I cannot laugh with you, Mr. Conolly," said Edith; "I have been too near and too lately at death's door."

"And such a door!" remarked Aunt Sophia naïvely.

The prince looked interrogatively from one to the other.

It is only the alien who notes how much even the most ordinary conversation teems with metaphor.

The helplessness of this magnificent creature in the toils of small talk moved the pity of both the ladies, and helped him to find a way to their hearts almost as much as his heroism. What also struck them very favourably was that the curiosity which consumed his fellow-countrymen seemed to be absent in his case, at all events, as regarded themselves. He took everything belonging to them as a matter of course, even their bathing dresses. In this last matter it is probable that they did him more than justice, since, to Prince Tarilam's eyes, whatever they wore must have appeared an excess of apparel; but the fact was, that while observant enough of externals, he attached little of that importance to them which, while among ourselves it is the indication of a weak nature, is everywhere the characteristic of an uncivilized race.

"Don't you think, Edith," whispered Aunt Sophia, after a pause that would have been embarrassing to almost any stranger, but which the visitor endured with all the *sang-froid*, and twice the grace of a

royal equerry, "don't you think we ought to ask him to tea?"

The notion of meeting the occasion in such a very conventional way drew a smile to the girl's face, which was immediately reflected in that of Tarilam.

"I shall have much pleasure to come," he said, with gentle earnestness.

"Now, how could he possibly have heard me?" exclaimed Aunt Sophia, wonderingly. "Did *you* hear me, Mr. Conolly?"

"No!" replied the midshipman laughing, "but Prince Tarilam can hear the grass grow and the buds blossom; if you wish to say anything you don't want him to hear, I warn you that you had better write it down. Then you will be safe."

The prince smiled sadly, threw out his hands with childish pathos, and shook his head. If he had said, "There, indeed, you have the advantage of poor me," he could not have expressed himself more clearly.

"We must really teach him to write, my dear," observed Aunt Sophia, *sotto voce*.

"If you will please to be so good," said Tarilam humbly.

"Drat the man," murmured Aunt Sophia, this time taking good care to be inaudible, "one cannot open one's lips within a mile of him, without his catching one up."

The acuteness of the prince's senses was indeed amazing, and it had been brought to perfection by practice; that of his intelligence was also not less

abnormal, but hitherto it had necessarily been dormant; and though "Knowledge to his eyes her ample page, rich with the spoils of time, had ne'er unrolled," he longed to read it. This species of ambition is very rare among those we call savages, and, indeed, with uneducated people of all sorts, who generally seek to excuse their ignorance by a pretence of indifference. Tarilam had none of this pinchbeck stoicism; it was not often that in the contemplation of a novelty, however amazing, he lost his dignity, but there were occasions when he did so. This happened, for example, on his first introduction to the ladies' little parlour, where the mirror which had once ornamented the cuddy of the *Ganges* was let into the wall.

It was curious, as the spectators of the circumstances afterwards agreed, that the mere sight of a perpendicular reflector—for with a horizontal one he must, of course, have been familiar—should have so moved him; perhaps it struck him as hanging water, but his delight at it was like that of a child.

Aunt Sophia and Conolly were greatly amused, but Edith was not so; it seemed somehow in one of whom she had begun to form a high ideal like a degradation; she was glad of the excuse of their having to change their attire, to withdraw from a scene that was nothing less than distressing to her. When she returned the prince had exhausted his admiration of the mirror, and was entranced by another object; he was standing with a little unframed water-colour drawing in his hand, and discoursing of it to the midshipman; she caught the

words, "Tetmil, Tetmil," repeated with great eagerness, as she entered the room.

"The prince is charmed with your picture of the bathing cove, Miss Edith," explained Conolly.

"It is a compliment to me that he should have recognized it," she replied modestly. His approval would somehow have been more welcome to her—though she owned to herself that this feeling was unreasonable—had it been less extravagant; but as Tarilam had never seen a picture, which seemed to him a species of magic, it was no wonder that the counterfeit presentment of a place he knew, on canvas, aroused his amazement.

Upon being informed that neither Aunt Sophia nor the midshipman could paint, he evinced unmistakable satisfaction. To have found that the whole race to which this enchantress belonged was dowered with the same gift would have given him, perhaps, an impression of his own inferiority too hopeless and discouraging, just as the reflection that "there are forty poets in Paisley" must strike despondency to the hearts of its neighbour towns. The difficulty which the guest experienced in communicating his ideas did not, on the other hand, rouse in Edith any sense of shortcoming, while the obvious distress which his failure to do so sometimes caused him awoke her sympathy.

The reason why so many people find pleasure in foreign travel, though only slightly acquainted with foreign tongues, is that neither at home nor abroad have they any particular thoughts to communicate; they are well content to be understood

by the waiters; whereas the struggle with Tarilam at this early period was to render adequately and intelligibly, not only the inferences and conclusions he drew from the novel objects around him, but his own views and opinions.

CHAPTER V.

MR. BATES FINDS HIS MASTER.

It was amazing how soon, with the more cultured of his new friends at Faybur, and especially with the ladies, Prince Tarilam made himself at home. His very unlikeness, because it consisted mainly in an excessive simplicity, facilitated assimilation, and made it as easy to get on with him as with a truthful child. In matters that were within their common cognizance, on the other hand, he exhibited an extraordinary natural sagacity, while every accession of knowledge added to his attractions as a companion.

With the sailors, however, this was not altogether the case. They had the usual prejudice of their class which induces them to apply the term "nigger"—however obviously inapplicable—to all persons not born of European parents, and causes them to be more sceptical even than the hereditary aristocrat of the nobility of nature. Some of them were jealous of the favour which the new-comer enjoyed with their superiors, and some resented the stranger's marvellous physical gifts, which threw those of their best runners and swimmers and climbers completely into the shade. As time went on, however, and

Tarilam's generous nature began to be recognized, these antagonistic sentiments remained only among those comparatively few with whom superiority of any kind, but especially that of moral worth, is always offensive. Even the two attendants that remained with him were treated for his sake with a civility which the captain's express commands would have otherwise failed to secure to them. It would have been hard, indeed, had it not been so, for they gave no trouble, and when not employed in ministering to the needs of their young master made themselves generally useful in a hundred ways.

A small canoe had been left with them, and they taught the men such arts of propelling it without stretcher or rowlock as seemed impossible till they themselves had learnt the accomplishment; they showed them how to catch fish by novel methods, and how, when caught, to smoke them, so as to make provision for the future; how to make rope as strong as cables out of the parasitic creepers, that hung like cobwebs from the trees; how to make mats and baskets; and to express from certain fruits a sherbet which they would have pronounced excellent had it but had a little rum in it. Nay, at the captain's request, these good-natured fellows even gave rudimentary lessons in the planting of yams, though they thought it, in common with all other useful labour, very literally *infra dig.* and only suitable for women.

All this time, while the harbour at Faybur remained like a mill-pond above the mill, and the

little island basked in sunshine and soft airs, the open sea was so high and rough that all communication was cut off with Breda. The prince and his two attendants were as completely separated from their own belongings as though they had been exiles, and, so far as he was concerned, he became every day more naturalized, and familiar with his new surroundings. In old times he had had thoughts, which the traditions and superstitions of his people had forbidden him to encourage, of annexing Faybur to the paternal dominions; and though it was now no longer in his power to do so, he found an attraction in it, such as his native isle did not possess. He passed most of his time at what might be called the seminary in "Ladies' Bay," where he showed an extraordinary facility in acquiring, like a child at a dame's school, not only the rudiments of the English tongue, but "the three R's." Hitherto his method of computation had been of the simplest; as many as one's eyes; as many as a crow's toes; as many as one's fingers. Both hands and one over made eleven, and was the limit of calculation. The feathers of a bird, the waves of the sea, and the number of stars in the firmament had all been for him just eleven.

He could now tot up to millions, and if the achievement gave him no great advantage, he derived an immense satisfaction from the curriculum that carried him thither. Never had pupil more kindly teachers than had he in the two ladies; never had tutors a more eager or grateful pupil. His difficulties, though they were often absurd, were

never laughed at, with one exception. He had a difficulty, as many of us have at home, though of a different kind, with the letter *h*, which even his musical voice could never pronounce soft enough; and it was a never-ending joke with his gentle preceptors that he always addressed one of them as Aunt Soapy.

When he accompanied them in their rambles, like a Sandford and Merton rolled into one, attended by two female Mr. Barlows, his education was still continued, so that he learnt as much out of school as in it; and, what was rather significant, had it been worth any one's while to observe it, when he was not walking with the ladies he preferred to walk by himself. It would be interesting to know, could one have got to "the back of mind," what the thoughts of this singular being were occupied with on these occasions. It is certain that (in one sense, at least) he did not think much of his ancestors. Though the descendant of a long line of kings, their power seemed but paltry, their aims ignoble, and their exploits of little worth. Culture, indeed, had had an effect on him very different from the result which it too often produces among ourselves; he was not puffed up by his newly-acquired superiority over his own race, but rather depressed by the sense of what was lacking in them and by his own inferiority to those about him; he had escaped being a prig (if one can imagine a Breda prig), because he was not cultured beyond his wits. What he had acquired, vast as it was in comparison with his previous knowledge, had but

convinced him how much he had yet to learn. Yet there is reason to believe that his reflections were not all despondent. It is no evidence of vanity to be conscious of our own dormant powers. Æsop felt it in slavery, and Keats at the horse jobber's; not that Tarilam was either philosopher or poet, but only that he felt himself fit for something beyond bestowing toffee on Royal favourites, or even distributing Orders of the Bone to meritorious man-slayers. If his vague and simple aspirations could have been put into words, they might have found appropriate expression in the poetic phrase, "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay;" albeit that yet unwritten line was not more unknown to him than Europe was. He was conscious only that beyond the sea somewhere there was another world, peopled with beings of a higher nature than his own, and whose life was more worth living. It may be he was wrong; "the wild joys of life," the dive through the "league-long rollers," and the coming up through the blue wave beyond it, the rush, dart in hand, through the air, on the ranks of the foe, the fray, and the feast, may be worth all our lacquer and gilding, but, if so, Tarilam erred in good company and from no ignoble instinct.

Thus thoughtfully was he strolling one morning along the cliff top that looked towards Breda, and at a distance from the camp, which, considering the nature of the ground, would have taken an ordinary walker some time to cover, when he suddenly perceived Mr. Bates coming towards him. The figure of the third mate was, of course, familiar to him,

but there was something in the movements of the man that puzzled him. He was gesticulating violently; holding up his hand as if to forbid his further advance, and shouting with discordant emphasis.

"Stop," he cried, "you something nigger." Then came an oath such as Tarilam had sometimes heard from the sailors, but the meaning of which he could never understand, for swearing is a product of civilization, and was unknown in Breda. "Keep where you are, I say; we don't want any prying savages hereabouts."

Tarilam could perceive the man was angry, but had no conception of the cause, nor did it give him any disquietude. What monopolized his attention was the strangeness of his gait—he lurched and swayed as he came on, and occasionally stumbled. If Tarilam had ever seen a horse with the staggers—but he had never even seen a horse, or evolved the idea of one out of the depths of his own consciousness—it would have reminded him of Mr. Bates, but if he had ever seen a man attempting to walk when very drunk, a still more perfect parallel would have occurred to him.

"Hi, hi! you; stop, I say." By this time the two had met; and Mr. Bates, with a flushed face and protruding eyes, had placed himself straight—or as straight as he could—before him, so as effectually to bar his progress. "Now just you go home again."

"Go home," repeated the prince, with mild surprise. "Why should I go home?"

"Well, there are a thousand reasons, but one

will do. Because we don't want any blown-up-with-gunpowder niggers here. Now just be off." Of the exact sense of the man's words, stammered and hiccupped as they were, there might have been easily some doubt, but about the tone in which they were uttered there could be none at all. If Tarilam had been a dog which had been bidden to go home by a brutal and ill-tempered master, he could not have been addressed more insultingly. Into the bronzed cheek of the prince there suddenly came a vivid colour, and into his soft eyes a flash of flame, which had Mr. Bates been in his usual frame of mind—which was inclined to prudence—would have warned him of danger like a signal fire. But the third mate was in an abnormally heroic state, full of ire, and also of the courage called Dutch.

"Look here," he stuttered, "you nigger, you'll have to go, and if you make me speak again you'll not do it with a whole skin. It is bad enough that you and those other two dusky devils should be kept in camp, holding your heads up and thinking yourselves the equals of Christian men, not to mention of officers and gentlemen like myself, but that you should come peeping and prying out of bounds here is intolerable. Go home, I say."

"No." The monosyllable was uttered gently, but with a determination which was unmistakable; and the speaker looked straight into the other's eyes as he said it. The quietness of expression in his face added, no doubt, to the temptation of its proximity, and Mr. Bates struck him on the mouth with the back of his hand. The next moment he

was swaying in air, with a consciousness of space about him, and of a fall of about four hundred feet sheer upon a rocky beach.

Mr. Bates's hair, in the absence of any barber, had grown long, and the other had seized him by it, as one takes a rabbit by the ears, and swung him off the cliff top. Face to face with the terrors of instant death, the drunken wretch was sobered in a moment; his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and his limbs grew limp like those of a dead man on the gallows-tree, but all his senses were keen enough.

He heard a sudden voice a long way off cry, "Tarilam! Tarilam!" in a tone of earnest entreaty, and he knew that the midshipman Conolly was pleading for his life. Never did eavesdropper listen to a conversation not intended for his private ear with a greater attention than this gentleman *sus per col* paid to the subsequent dialogue.

"Let him go, let him go," halloed the midshipman. Mr. Bates, when he heard that phrase, reflected with a pang upon the indefiniteness of the English tongue; the prince might very well have taken the words as an encouragement to drop him, instead of pulling him up. "Don't kill him! spare him!" shouted the midshipman, whose voice as it grew nearer unhappily became less distinct through want of breath.

"He struck me," answered the prince irresolutely, and without turning his head. He seemed to be selecting the most jagged rock for the reception of the body of Mr. Bates, which was oscillating under

his hand like a pendulum. "No man has ever struck Tarilam and lived to say so."

"For *my* sake, for *my* sake," urged the midshipman, "I beseech you not to let him fall."

"You are my chosen friend; I can refuse you nothing," murmured the prince, regretfully; and with no more effort than it costs a sailor to heave the lead, he landed the third mate upon terra firma, where he lay, though he was not so inanimate as he looked, like a sack just dropped from a crane.

"How did it happen? What did he quarrel with you about?" inquired Conolly, hurrying up, and gazing with amazement on the prostrate mate.

"I don't know," answered Tarilam, gloomily. "He wandered in his walk, and stumbled in his talk, and was angry, and then he gave me a blow. I shall feel it here," and he touched his mouth, "as long as I live."

"It has not marked you," replied Conolly, naïvely—in the midshipman's mess blows were not uncommon in those days, nor the demands of honour very exacting—"but you may depend upon it, he will never boast of it—will you, sir?" This appeal he made to Mr. Bates himself in answer to a glance of adhesion from that gentleman to the promise thus made on his behalf.

"I will never, never boast of it," he murmured earnestly. "The prince may take his davey of that?"

Indeed, it was pretty clear that, as regards recent proceedings, Mr. Bates had not very much to boast

of; and might well be trusted to be silent for his own sake.

"Come, let us go back to camp," said Conolly persuasively.

With a quiet gesture of assent, Tarilam turned away, and without so much as a glance at his still prostrate foe, began to retrace his steps. Mr. Bates's eyes, like those of a snake in the grass, followed him with an expression of concentrated malignity, which also included his young preserver.

"To-day for you, my friends," he muttered, between his teeth, "to-morrow for me."

It would have been better for all parties, himself included, had Mr. Bates been permitted to obey the laws of gravity.

It may be taken, as a rule, that the time which is given to an unmitigated scoundrel to repent himself in is passed in some occupation of quite another kind, and Mr. Bates was no exception to it. A bad man's life is like a bad novel; the third volume is generally the worst part of it; and there is little cause for regret if its conclusion is what the reviewers describe as "hurried."

CHAPTER VI.

LET US KILL THE NIGGER.

LIFE in Faybur, though for the most part uneventful enough, did not run quite so smoothly with Captain Head and his officers as, thanks to their solicitude, it was made to do for the two ladies. That that private still, the existence of which Edith had so unconsciously betrayed to Mr. Marston, was from time to time at work somewhere, though its whereabouts—for the scene of its operations was easily shifted—had hitherto remained undiscovered, was certain; half a dozen cases of drunkenness had come under the notice of the authorities, and given them great disquietude. Their anxiety would have been even greater had it not seemed pretty clear that the offence was confined to a few of the sailors only; not, as was rightly concluded, that every man Jack of them after so prolonged an abstinence would not have got drunk if he could, but that those who had so ingeniously invented the means of indulging themselves in that luxury took care to keep the secret to themselves. The wisdom of this reticence was unquestionable, for, as matters stood, it was difficult to punish even those who were manifestly guilty of the offence in question.

"It is all very well," Messrs. Murdoch, Rudge, and Mellor would stutter, when accused of being intoxicated—and it was these three men who most frequently fell under that suspicion—"but how is it possible for a fellow to get drunk when every drop of liquor is under lock and key in the doctor's tent?" They continued to attribute their condition to the effect of the climate upon their respective systems, and except that there was a kettle missing, the uses of which it was not judicious for "the court" to point out to the public at large, there was really no means of refuting this line of defence. The gravity of the danger, however, was fully recognized; and while each instance of delinquency was hushed up as much as possible, not a stone was left unturned to discover the root of the mischief.

Of all this the two ladies were blissfully ignorant, and though Edith, as we know, had her own views of the doubtful tenure on which authority existed in Faybur, the matter had of late months troubled her but little. One could not say that her thoughts were fixed elsewhere, but they had wandered with more or less persistency in another direction. The arrival of Prince Tarilam had very agreeably broken the monotony of life in Ladies' Bay. It had from the first been a pleasure to teach him, so far as she was competent to do so, those "Fairy Tales of Science" and "Long Results of Time," the simplest details of which had for him the attributes of a miracle and the attractions of magic. To note his mind expanding under the light of knowledge, like a flower in the sun, was a spectacle

most interesting to her, while before long the advantage became not wholly on one side, but reciprocal, and she found herself listening almost as often to a tutor as talking to a pupil. However simple were the views of Tarilam they were original, and while as natural as those of a child appealing to his elders, were also as audacious. Untrammelled by custom and the restrictions imposed by education, he discussed with as much firmness as freedom the ways of fate and the mysteries of being. The simple but illogical faith of his own people he had never accepted, but had hitherto been content with a contemptuous tolerance of it. The theology which he learned from Edith recommended itself to him in many ways, but by no means exhausted his spiritual curiosity. Aunt Sophia was often not less appalled by the boldness of his speculations than amazed by their intelligence.

On the other hand, there were reasons connected with Edith's antecedents—the blight that had fallen upon her happiness in the loss of her lover, and made a broken column of her young life—that prevented these “obstinate questionings” from shocking her, and even to some extent recommended the interrogator. Not even in the old days, with Layton himself, had she discussed these matters with so much freedom and interest.

After the employments of the day were over, some of which, too, he usually shared with the ladies, it was become a custom with the prince to join them at their evening meal; an officer or two, or the chaplain, would sometimes be of the party,

and still more often Master Conolly, who would contribute to the amusements of the evening by his gift of song. But at other times Tarilam would visit the ladies quite alone, and on such occasions Edith found his company most agreeable, because he was then more like himself, and would express his natural sentiments without that dread of ridicule which had already found its place in a breast that had hitherto been absolutely fearless. One evening, when the three were occupied in the usual manner—the two ladies employed in needlework, and Tarilam fashioning some graceful ornament out of tortoiseshell, an art in which he was a proficient—their conversation was suddenly interrupted by a tumult without; there was a roar of voices and a rush of feet, and hardly had they risen from their chairs before the little cottage was surrounded by a mob of sailors and the parlour windows, which, as usual, were wide open, filled by excited and furious faces.

“What is the matter?” inquired Edith with quiet distinctness. Her face was pale, but otherwise she exhibited no sign of fear. Aunt Sophia, on the other hand, was speechless with terror. It was the impression of both women that a mutiny had broken out.

“Matter enough, miss,” returned a voice she knew; it was that of William Dean, the gunner, a man who had always borne a good character, and behaved himself to her with great respect. “Murder’s the matter, and yonder stands the man who did it.”

He pointed to the prince, and as he did so a tumultuous and inarticulate cry of fury arose from those about him.

"Kill him! kill the nigger!"

"Make way then," interposed a brutal voice. "Don't talk, but do. Let me get a shot at him." And flushed with rage and liquor, the man Mellor, pistol in hand, here forced himself to the front, and levelled his weapon at Tarilam's head.

Before he could pull the trigger Edith had stepped swiftly between them.

"You vile coward," she cried. "Is there no man here who will see fair play and justice done?"

"Justice! Yes; we'll see justice done," answered a shrill voice. "Let us take him to the same spot, lads, where he killed the mate, and serve him likewise."

"What, without trial?" cried Edith vehemently. "Are you savages, then, who have forgotten that you were once Englishmen? William Dean, Luke Norman, Robert Ray, as you are honest men, I charge you to stand by me!"

"We mean no harm to *you*, miss," returned the gunner, "but as for this here prince, as he calls himself, we must have life for life."

"And so you shall, if he has taken life. I'll stake my own that he is innocent. Look at him, men, and tell me if he wears a murderer's face."

Like a curtain that conceals some noble picture, she drew herself aside and showed him to them.

Motionless as a statue he stood confronting

them, with a sort of mild amazement in his face. The confusion of tongues had prevented his half-cultured ear from catching what was said, but he could perceive that the intruders were violently enraged and against himself. It was his first experience (save one) of brutal passion in his new acquaintances, and it seemed to afford him all the interest of novelty. His eyes glanced from one to the other in dumb surprise, and then turned interrogatively to Edith.

"Tarilam does not understand," he murmured, with a quiet smile.

"They say you have committed a murder."

"No." Never was charge so serious met by so phlegmatic a denial. There was no more waste of tone than of words about it. If he had been accused of leaving the door open, he could not have defended himself with greater indifference, or at the same time more convincingly. The shake of the head that accompanied the monosyllable intensified alike its force and its *sang-froid*. "If anything of the kind has happened," it seemed to say, "I do assure you it was not I that did it."

Had his audience, indeed, been one capable of appreciating the value of evidence, the prince would have no longer been in danger; but the men were blind with passion, and, moreover, there were some among them less concerned to detect a culprit than to sacrifice a victim.

"He is lying! Kill the nigger! kill him," arose again from all sides; nor was it possible that a catastrophe could have been much longer averted had

not a murmur from the fringe of the crowd announced the arrival of assistance. "Stand back, boys, here's the captain!"

It was not indeed the captain, but his avant courier, Master Conolly, who had run on ahead of him, and with drawn cutlass was in a moment scattering the crowd to left and right. The man Mellor, indeed, presented his pistol at him, but another sailor who stood by struck the barrel upwards and the weapon exploded in the air.

The sound of it seemed to remind the rest of the seriousness of their course of conduct and had a sobering effect, which was greatly increased by the appearance of the captain, followed by Mr. Redmayne, both armed to the teeth.

"Who fired that pistol?" he inquired, in a tone sharp and short as the shot itself.

"John Mellor."

"Is any one hurt here?" The captain was looking into the little parlour and "counting heads" as he put the question.

"No, sir."

"That's well, and especially well for John Mellor," was the grim reply, "for if one hair of these ladies, or of the prince, their guest, had been injured, I would have shot him dead."

Mr. Mellor vanished silently away, and the crowd began to thin.

"You mutinous scoundrels!" continued the captain. "What is it you want that you must needs raise this tumult and disgrace yourselves in the eyes of our friend and ally?"

A murmur of discontent and menace ran through the crowd.

"He has committed murder."

"What, the prince? Who says so? Let the man that can prove it stand forth. Would you commit murder yourselves by slaying a man without trial? That a foul crime has been done in our midst is only too true, but it cannot be wiped out by another. Come, all of you, to the officers' tent, and hear the matter sifted. Prince Tarilam, I must trouble you to come with us; for though no assurance of yours is necessary to clear you in my eyes, this miserable suspicion must be stamped out."

With a pained and wondering look, such as children wear who are witnesses to the quarrels of their seniors, Tarilam bowed assent. It had been brought home to him for the first time that these superior people, dowered with such gifts and attributes that had seemed to him little short of superhuman, could be as violent and irrational, when the humour seized them, as the natives of Amrac. As he took leave of the ladies he retained Edith's hand in his for a few seconds.

"You stood between me and the short gun," he murmured with intense emotion. "But for you Tarilam would have been a dead man. He will never forget it."

"I ran no risk," she would have answered, but with his usual swift and noiseless tread he was gone in a moment.

Conolly and a couple of sailors who could be

relied on were left behind as a guard for the ladies.

What had happened they had yet to learn, but that such a precaution should have been deemed necessary to their safety was full of sombre significance.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EXAMINATION.

THE "officers' quarters" in the camp at Faybur was a long narrow tent, furnished, not uncomfortably, with the contents of half-a-dozen cabins. Everything, however, had this evening been moved away from the centre of the apartment, to make room for a certain something, which lay under a sheet on trestles, and at once, with a terrible fascination, attracted every eye. The feet standing out stark and stiff, and the veiled face showing sharply through its covering, presented the unmistakable lineaments of death. How is it, one wonders, that no sooner has the breath of life departed than the very form that contained it becomes new and strange to the eyes of the living! Heaven forbid that it may be no foretaste or analogue of the final separation from us of the soul.

Young as he was, Tarilam had seen death in many forms, nor had it for him the awe and mystery that it possesses for more cultured minds; but as he followed the captain's steps, he approached the silent shape with a certain air of reverence as well as interest that had its effect upon the beholders. Quietly and without crowding, the majority

of the cast-aways had entered the tent and were regarding his demeanour with keen attention. If the prince had really committed the murder, as one observed to the other, it could not have been the first by many, or he could scarcely have "kept himself so cool" in the presence of his victim. Once only he showed signs of perturbation, when they reached the corpse, and the captain gently drew back the sheet and revealed the features of the first mate. Then Tarilam uttered the dead man's name, with infinite gentleness, and sighed profoundly. "I did not know it had been so good a friend of mine," he simply said.

"So good a friend of all of us," exclaimed the captain, vehemently. "A more dutiful officer and a more loyal messmate than Robert Marston never drew breath. My curse upon the cowardly hand that slew him."

"And mine," "And mine," cried several voices.

There was something menacing—nay, almost bloodthirsty—in the ring of them, which seemed to remind the captain that there was less need to arouse the general indignation than to turn it into the proper channel. When he spoke again his voice took a graver and more judicial tone. "This poor fellow here, my friends, was as dear to me as to any one of you, and none can be more resolved than I to avenge him; but, above all things, let us be just. We have no lawyers amongst us, but it will be possible, I hope, to get to the bottom of this matter without them; and, in the first place, it be-

hoves us to hear what those have to say who saw him first where he lay dead. As for me, I know nothing except from hearsay. Mr. Redmayne yonder brings me word that Mr. Marston has been picked up on the beach with his head battered in, and Mr. Doyle reports that he is dead. That is all that I know for certain, and all that nine-tenths of you can know, yet I find fifty men have taken upon themselves to lay the guilt at the door of a fellow-creature because his skin is a trifle darker than their own. William Dean, you were one of those men. Now let us hear what accusation you bring against Prince Tarilam, and on what grounds."

The gunner stepped forward with an embarrassed air. "I know nothing, sir, but what I was told by my mates; they said that the prince had done it to their certain knowledge."

"*Who* said?" interrupted the captain, curtly; "let us have their names, if you please."

"Well, sir, there was Mellor for one."

"Very good, let Mellor stand forth. You are the man who fired a pistol just now at Mr. Conolly, to prove your detestation of murder, I suppose. Well, what do you know about this other?"

"The pistol went off of its own head in my hand," growled Mellor. "I never meant to hurt the young gentleman; it was that prince as we were after."

"Why, what had he done?"

"Chucked Mr. Marston over the cliff."

The sort of murmur which is called "sensation," mixed with a note of assent, here arose from the

crowd. They had found a spokesman to justify their late proceedings at last.

"You saw him do it, did you?"

"No, I didn't, but Rudge and Murdoch, they saw him."

"Let Rudge and Murdoch stand forth."

The two men obeyed, Rudge willingly and even demonstratively enough, Murdoch with less promptness. His face was white to the lips, and he kept it studiously averted from the spot where the dead man was lying.

"Now tell us what you know, Rudge."

"It was my afternoon off duty, and I was rambling about the island with Murdoch, and presently I got tired, and sat down to have a smoke, and Murdoch he went further on. I had not been two minutes alone, when I heard him cry out, 'Rudge! Rudge!' and I jumped up and ran to him. He was standing on the cliff top, pointing down below; and I looked down and saw the body on the beach. 'Burst my buttons,' says I, 'why, if it ain't Mr. Marston.'"

"'Yes,' he cries, 'some one has pitched him over the cliff;' and he was shaking his head and flapping his hands, and very much put out about it was Murdoch."

"But how did he know Mr. Marston had been pushed over the cliff?" inquired the captain. "Why might he not have fallen over?"

"I suppose he never thought of that," said Rudge stolidly.

"That was it; I never thought of that," echoed

Murdoch, replying to his mate's look of inquiry. His voice was hoarse and mechanical; and when he had spoken his tongue flickered about his lips as though they were in need of moisture.

"Now I should have thought that had been the most likely supposition to come into any man's mind, unless it was already running on something else," observed the captain reflectively. "Mr. Marston yonder," here he leant his head sideways towards his dead friend exactly as he would have done had he been alive, "was not one to make enemies."

"True for you, sir, that is so," was murmured on all sides.

"Then why should the notion of any one's having done him a mischief have entered into your mind?" inquired the captain.

"The ground was trodden all about as though a struggle had been going on," exclaimed Rudge, "and the grass on the brink of the hill cliff was torn away in tufts as though some one had clung there till he had been flung off."

"I am speaking to Murdoch, not to you, Rudge," exclaimed the captain sharply. "I suppose he has a tongue of his own in his head like the rest of us."

If that was so, the person in question did not seem at all inclined to use it; he stood silent, with his arms folded on his chest, his head sunk forward, and his eyes doggedly fixed upon the ground. The captain glanced from this unattractive object to his guest, who, with head erect and fine form drawn to

its full height, presented indeed a strange contrast to it. "Now I want to know who it was that, having satisfied himself so easily that there was murder done here, went a step further, and laid it at the door of Prince Tarilam?"

"It was Mr. Bates, sir," said the gunner.

"Mr. Bates," exclaimed the captain, in astonishment. "Then why is not Mr. Bates himself here to say so?"

"He ain't very well, sir," observed Rudge; "he was took bad at the sight of Mr. Marston. But he told us with his own lips that the prince had done it, for he had almost served him the same trick himself, at the very same place, not three weeks ago."

"Do you mean that he said the prince had tried to throw *him* over the cliff?"

"Yes, sir, he did, and that Mr. Conolly caught him at it."

"Fetch Mr. Bates and Mr. Conolly here this moment."

"Mr. Bates is ill in bed, sir."

"Then bring him out of his bed. I don't move from this spot till this affair is sifted to the very bottom."

As a legal investigation, the captain's method of proceeding left much to be desired. It was as haphazard and inconsequent as it was informal; but it was not altogether unadapted to the materials with which he had to deal; while the personal interest, and even the bias, he showed in the matter were far from being resented by his audience. The

appearance of Matthew Murdoch, and the manner in which he had made his statement, had prejudiced them against him; but they were also prejudiced against Tarilam. There was so little logic in their mental composition that they did not understand that if one of the two "suspects" was guilty the other must needs be innocent.

Presently Mr. Bates appeared, led between two men, which gave him the air of being in custody. His face was red and swollen, his eyes were unnaturally prominent and wandered round the tent as if in search of something. When they lit upon the dead man, however, he took no more notice of him than if he had been asleep.

"It was Tarilam as did it," were his first words.

The captain, without attention to the abrupt and voluntary character of this statement, merely inquired, "How do you know that?"

"Because he tried to kill me in the same way. He held me over the cliff top and would have dropped me, just as he dropped Mr. Marston, and on the very same point of rock. He knew the best place to do it."

A murmur of indignation went round the tent. Here was evidence enough, indeed, and to the taste of the hearers.

The captain turned mechanically to the prince, who gravely bowed his head. "It is quite true that I meant to drop him," he quietly said. "He struck me."

There was a low growl of anger and discontent.

"He has confessed it!" muttered a voice or two; and one man cried, "Hang him! hang him!"

The captain held up his hand for silence.

"Why was I never told of this, Mr. Bates?"

"Mr. Conolly asked me not to tell."

"Let us hear what Mr. Conolly has to say about it."

The midshipman had by this time arrived, followed by the two ladies, for whom the crowd made way. They did not, however, push to the front, but shrank from the neighbourhood of the dead body; they had only just learnt the nature of the catastrophe which had caused the mob to invade their dwelling; their distress on Mr. Marston's account was extreme, the elder lady was almost overwhelmed by it, and would willingly have remained within doors, but she could not permit her niece to come unattended, and Edith's interest in the living had overborne her natural tremors.

Conolly stepped forward and briefly stated what he knew of the rencontre between the prince and the third mate. It was quite true, he said, that he had kept silence upon the matter, but not more for the prince's sake than for that of Mr. Bates, who had committed an unprovoked assault upon him. The prince had resented it, no doubt, with unnecessary violence, but from what he (Conolly) knew of him, he was, he was persuaded, quite incapable of any such unprovoked and murderous outrage as was now laid to his charge.

The third mate seemed to take no notice of this observation; he moved his hands across his eyes, as

though to sweep away some obstacle, and peered through the crowd in the direction of the ladies with anxious persistence. Edith was speaking eagerly, though in low tones, to Mr. Redmayne, who, in his turn, whispered a few words to the captain. "By all means. Let us hear what Mr. Doyle has to say upon the matter," answered the latter aloud.

The surgeon, who had just removed from the captain's side to that of Mr. Bates, here answered to his name.

"When was it that you first saw Mr. Marston at the foot of the cliff?"

"About an hour and a half ago, sir."

"Was he then alive?"

"No, sir. No man could have lived for one minute after such injuries as he had received. On the other hand, from the condition of the body he could not have been dead long. Half-an-hour at the most."

"You are confident of that," said the captain.

"I am quite certain that he had not been dead an hour."

"Miss Norbury," said the captain, "can you state with accuracy at what time Prince Tarilam came to your house this evening?"

Aunt Sophia strove to speak, but the situation was overpowering; the knowledge that every eye was turned on her, but especially the spectacle of the dead man, who seemed to be awaiting, like the rest, in dumb expectancy, her momentous reply, was too much for her nerves. "I can answer that question," said Edith, in a firm and confident tone, "for it so

happened that I remarked to my aunt upon the circumstance that Prince Tarilam had joined us earlier than usual. It was fully two hours ago."

"Did you look at your watch?"

"My aunt did so."

Here Aunt Sophia found her voice.

"It is quite true, Captain Head; it is exactly two hours and a half since the prince joined us."

A murmur of satisfaction ran through the crowd. The watch that Miss Norbury held in her hand appealed to their senses as no mere verbal testimony would have done.

"That circumstance, at all events, frees our guest from all suspicion of guilt in this matter," observed the captain. "I think it is due to him, Mr. Bates, that you should acknowledge as much."

The third mate answered not a word. He was staring wildly at Edith with both his hands stretched out before him. "I never pushed him over," he cried. "He jumped over of himself. I can't help his dripping with water. Keep him off, I say; keep him off!" The intense terror of the man manifest in his face and eye and trembling limbs was shocking to witness, and communicated itself to those about him. They fled from him in all directions, and left him standing by the corpse. The surgeon only kept his place by his side.

"Can any one explain the meaning of this?" inquired the captain in an awe-struck tone. "Is it possible that this unhappy man is confessing to having perpetrated the crime himself?"

"No, sir," said Mr. Doyle, with an air of conviction. "It is fair to say that there is evidence enough that he was absent when the murder—for a murder I fear it was—was committed. Mr. Bates is suffering from an attack of delirium tremens."

CHAPTER VIII.

WAS IT POSSIBLE?

SHOCKING as was the murder of Mr. Marston to his friend, the captain, it was hardly more terrible or symptomatic of trouble to come than was the professional dictum pronounced by Mr. Doyle as respected the third mate. Delirium tremens is not a disease that is engendered by occasional excess, though even that would make the circumstance of the gravest significance, but by long and continuous drinking habits; and these had been proved to exist in one of his own officers, a man in duty bound to set an example of sobriety, and especially to discover and expose the drunkenness which had so mysteriously crept into the camp. That the offence was closely connected with the assassination of the first mate there could now be little doubt. Mr. Marston had been very active in his endeavours to find out from whence the liquor came, and who supplied it, which had of late been demoralizing the men; and it was only too probable that in some solitary expedition he had come upon the delinquents in the very act of distillation, and had fallen a victim to their violence. Edith herself, as we know, had been stopped and turned back for a similar

reason; and Tarilam had been treated in the like manner.

In their case their object had not been detection, and therefore their lives had not been sacrificed by those they had involuntarily disturbed in their wrong-doing. Mr. Marston, an officer devoted to his duties and to be deterred by no menaces of personal violence, had perished at their lawless hands. So far the matter was clear, but as to who had been the actual murderers—for it was probable, unless the first mate had been taken at a disadvantage, which the signs of conflict about the fatal place seemed to evidence, there were more than one—it was by no means certain.

Appearances seemed to point to Murdoch and Rudge, but not more strongly than to Mr. Bates himself, who, however, was freed from the consequence of his own confession (or what had looked very like it) by the testimony of Mr. Doyle, in whose company he had walked from the camp when the surgeon was summoned to the scene of the murder. At that time the third mate was sober enough, and had appeared greatly moved at what had happened. Indeed, it was Mr. Doyle's impression that Bates had taken to liquor immediately on his return to camp in order to drown the remembrance of the spectacle he had just beheld.

For the present, such were the doubts and difficulties that overhung the case, the murderer of Mr. Marston remained unpunished, a thing itself of sombre import and evil augury. Mr. Bates, indeed, was deprived of his rank, and solemnly warned that

on the next occasion of being found in a state of intoxication he should be soundly flogged; but even this measure, however just and salutary, had danger in it, since it openly threw into the arms of the disaffected an ally to whom there still clung some relics of authority.

If, then, circumstances gave rise to apprehension in a man so solid and "four-square to every wind that blew" as Captain Head, we may imagine how they affected the ladies. It was only too evident to them that Faybur had ceased to be that paradise in which, though cut off from home and friends, they had long resigned themselves to pass their lives. To Edith, indeed, the prospect had been even welcome, but neither Aunt Sophia or herself had contemplated the possibility of such events as had lately taken place. The place was an Eden still, but not the same Eden to them as it had been before the serpent had made known its presence. The stain of murder seemed to blotch the fairness of Nature herself; the fumes of liquor to mingle with the perfumes of the air; and the dark clouds of insecurity to gather shape and volume in the azure sky. Only one or two were in all probability connected with the actual crime, but it was only too likely that others were cognizant of it, and it was no wonder that a certain distrust of their own people arose in the two women's minds. This was greatly intensified by the late behaviour of the sailors towards the prince; Edith especially could not forget the spectacle of those furious faces at her window, or the cries with which they had demanded his innocent blood.

They would have taken the life of the man to whom she owed her own, not only without scruple, but with eager and tumultuous joy. When she contrasted their bloodthirsty demeanour with the noble calm with which her guest had confronted it, the question, "Which was the savage?" could hardly fail to occur to her; and it could have but one reply.

The prince's behaviour in the tent had impressed her still more favourably. Some of the proceedings had necessarily been unintelligible to him, but he knew at least that the result of them would be a matter of life or death to him; this, indeed, had been clear even to his two attendants, who directly he made his appearance had loyally pressed forward to protect his person.

"Commit no violence," he had said to them in his own language. "Whatever happens to me, if I am killed, tell the king, my father, not to avenge my death." And from that moment he had remained unmoved, like one who, though on the verge of the grave, has nothing to trouble him, his final dispositions having been made.

Edith, who had learnt from him sufficient of the Bredan tongue to understand what he had said, asked him the reason of it, since it was hardly to be expected that her efforts in the direction of religious culture could have taught him the sublime lesson of forgiveness of injuries.

"I told my father not to avenge my death," he said, "because I felt that if I was condemned to die, it would be done under a mistake." The ex-

planation, though highly creditable, appeared, considering the simplicity of the speaker, a little subtle; there was, moreover, an expression in his face that was new to her; for it conveyed for the first time the idea of concealment.

"Was that your only reason?" she inquired.

"No," was the quiet reply; "I did not want war to occur on my account, since if it did so, it would set your people's faces against you, because you had been Tarilam's friend."

"That was very good and thoughtful of you," said Edith, with gentle gravity and a blush, which she strove in vain to repress.

Tarilam raised his eyebrows; the precautions he had taken for her safety had occurred to him so naturally that he was wholly unconscious of their chivalry.

"When things seemed going against you, prince, and the horrid men were shouting that you were guilty," said Aunt Sophia a little afterwards—she was curious about the young man's "views," and given to sounding him when she got him alone—"did you feel no fear?"

He smiled and shook his head disdainfully.

"But there would be nothing to be ashamed of if you did," she persisted; "death has its terrors even for Christian folk."

He opened his large eyes in wonder.

"When we die in Breda," he said, "there is no more trouble; the Amrac people cannot reach us. The storm may rage upon the water, but it does not wake us; we sleep in peace."

"But you would have been taken away from those who are dear to you—your father, for example."

"It would not be for long; my father is old, and would soon rejoin me."

"And Majuba?"

"Majuba would grieve," he admitted gravely.

"And would not Edith grieve also, don't you think?"

"Would it be worth her while? Who is Tarilam?"

"It was worth her while to risk her life for him when the sailor would have shot him," said Miss Norbury reproachfully.

"Do you suppose I do not remember?" he answered plaintively. "I know a boy who had a tame sea-gull, that had broken its wing; it got down to the water, and would have been blown out to sea and died, had he not plunged in after it, though the bay was full of sharks. It was a generous instinct, but it was not worth while."

"But Edith likes you better than the boy his bird."

"Do you really think so?" His eyes kindled with eager light.

"Why, of course. Did you not save her life?"

"Ah, yes," he sighed. "It was because she remembered that." The light went out from his face; his voice took a tone of hopeless despondency, the meaning of which it was impossible for any woman to mistake.

"My poor prince!" murmured Aunt Sophia to herself sympathetically.

Though a match-maker to the core, she shrank from having any hand in such an affair as this; she was not particular about the eligibility of a *parti*, provided that he was "nice" in himself, and would be likely to make a good husband. If everything else had promised well, she might even have been inclined to forgive a difference of race in a European, but the notion of an inhabitant of Breda, however princely and attractive, however chivalrous and unselfish, venturing to lift his eyes to Edith was a shock to her. She liked the prince, but it was out of the question that she could give him any assistance as a suitor, even if such help could have availed him, which she felt confident it could not. A girl that had loved Charles Layton would never listen to poor Tarilam; she did not say, even to herself, would never stoop to listen, for she was not without appreciation of his noble qualities; but the unlikeness of the two men was too pronounced to admit of her picturing the possibility of the one being substituted for the other.

She did not understand that so far as that difference affected the matter at all, it weighed with Edith in Tarilam's favour. If there had been anything in him to remind her of her former lover in the faintest degree, she would not have admitted him to her intimacy. As it was, it never struck her that in so doing she was giving him a certain encouragement. He could never have found the pathway to her heart which Layton had trodden; every step would have disinterred some dead regret; but was it not possible that he might reach it by some

road of his own? He was like some untutored mathematical genius who attempts a problem in the schools by a method worked out by himself, less direct and less convenient, indeed, than the authorized one, but which, nevertheless, solves it.

The consciousness of having done her best for him in the late fracas no doubt strengthened Edith's interest in the young fellow; for if we are inclined to hate those we have injured, it is no less true that those we have benefited thereby establish a claim upon our affections. And yet if it had been suggested to Edith Norbury that she had even begun to entertain a tender passion for Prince Tarilam, she would have denied the imputation with indignation, though not with the contempt which the idea had aroused in Aunt Sophia.

CHAPTER IX.

HALF-MAST HIGH.

AFTER the social storm which had threatened such damage to the little community of castaways, there ensued a calm in Faybur. The murder of Mr. Marston, though its perpetrators remained undiscovered, produced a very deep effect; and while it shocked the majority, very literally sobered the malcontents. In the latter case, perhaps the fear of discovery induced good behaviour in the most of them, but, at all events, there was no further outbreak, either of drunkenness or insubordination.

The continuance of bad weather still prevented the other natives of Breda from visiting the island, but the two that had accompanied the prince had made themselves so pleasant and so useful as to afford the most lively hopes of concord between their fellow-countrymen and the ship's company. As to Tarilam himself, the falseness of the accusation against him having once been admitted, public feeling veered round in his favour, and his gentle and genial qualities being thus afforded a fair chance of appreciation, he became extremely popular. A few only held aloof from him; the degraded mate

and his three myrmidons, Mellor, Rudge, and Murdoch.

"If the prince comes to harm through any act of your friends," the captain had informed Mr. Bates, with a vigour of language which modern type would be at a loss to reproduce, "and I fail for the second time in bringing the murder home to any one of you, as sure as my name is Henry Head I'll hang you all four"—a warning that had the happiest effect in putting all notion of pistolling the prince out of their minds; as to attacking him without fire-arms, and in no greater disproportion of force than four to one, they had not so much as entertained the idea of it. Mr. Bates never saw Tarilam without a certain swimming of the head, produced by the recollection of being held at arm's length over the precipice where a far worthier life than his own had found its end; and the narrative of that experience, told with much personal feeling, if without dramatic artifice, had had a most wholesome effect upon his three friends.

From the sentimental, or Paul-and-Virginia point of view, the attractions of such an island as Faybur were manifest. It was quite the place for two young lovers to dwell in, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," till they both died together on the same day in one another's arms; but it did not afford scope enough for the energies of upwards of a hundred British sailors. There was not enough work for them to do, and too little room for play. They took but limited interest in literature, chiefly from the fact that only a very few of them could

read. Under Edith's auspices, Tarilam indeed had become a better scholar than almost any of them except the officers. No one wrote but the captain, who kept a journal which he called a log, and which was wooden enough to merit its title. Conversation languished in the tents for want of a topic.

Under these circumstances it was only natural that since a murdered man, whose assassin had never been discovered, was buried in the place, that his ghost should occasionally be seen. Ghosts are not seen in large towns, but in country places, where monotony and some poor substitute for imagination beget them. With the trifling exception of the *Phantom Ship*, which has something professional about it to excuse its appearance, ghosts are only seen at sea under the most appropriate circumstances, *i. e.* in a dead calm. Captain Head felt it to be a bad sign that poor Mr. Marston did not rest in the grave which had been dug for him in the most beautiful spot in the whole island, but must needs walk all over it, and meet the very last men in the ship's company whom he would have chosen to consort with during life. Mellor and Rudge had both seen him, and had had fits in consequence. It was whispered that Murdoch was in the constant habit of seeing him, though he was very reticent upon the matter himself, and that Mr. Bates remained in his tent, as obstinately as Achilles, after nightfall, for fear of being addressed by his quondam brother officer, albeit, when in the flesh they had not been on speaking terms. If the vision had been confined to these scoundrels, they might have

been welcome to it, but others had seen it, or thought they had seen it, and the whole morale of the camp was getting endangered by the superstition. The captain, who suspected trick, rather encouraged testimony in order that he might get to the root of the matter. One evening William Dean asked for a few words in private with him.

The gunner was known to be a good fellow, though he had been carried away by the late whirlwind of indignation aroused by Bates against the prince, and was by no means a liar—indeed he had not the imagination for it. “Cap’n,” he said, very gravely and respectfully, “I’ve seen somethink just now.”

“Very good; I am glad you came to tell me at once,” was the sardonic reply; “one likes to have the very latest information from the spirit world.”

“But I am not sure as he *was* a spirit.”

“Oh, this is a new phase. Mr. Marston has come to life again, has he?”

“It was not Mr. Marston, cap’n. It was the Malay.”

“What do you mean? The man that came over with the Bredan folk?”

“Yes, sir.”

“But they can’t come over in this weather?”

“Nevertheless, not half-an-hour ago, I saw him as sure as my name is William Dean.”

“Where?”

“Not fifty yards from the look-out. He seemed to be coming away from it, though that could hardly be, as the man on duty saw nothing of him.”

"Who is the man on duty?"

"Matthew Murdoch."

The captain's face became very grave. "Now just say how it happened."

"Well, I thought I would climb up the cliff to have a pipe and see how the wind lay; it was falling a bit, and the sea going down all round, they told me. When I was within twenty feet of the top, or so, there stood a man by himself, who was looking right down into the camp. He kept himself behind a bush, but I saw him before he saw me, and he was not a white man."

"Why should he not have been one of the prince's men?"

"Because I had left them both below. Moreover, he had only a waistcloth, such as the Malay wore. The sight of him upset me, and I stumbled; the noise made him glance towards me, and our eyes met, and the Malay it was, sure enough. He was off like a bird, and into the bush in a moment."

"Did you run after him?"

"No; I knew it was no good. I went on to the flagstaff; Murdoch had his back to me, but heard me coming. 'They are quiet enough down there, I suppose,' he said."

"What did he mean by that?"

"Well, I guess he thought I was somebody else."

The captain took in all the possibilities at a glance. A spy on the island, and Murdoch in traitorous communication with him—ambush and massacre! "And when he found out it was you?"

"He started a bit; then, says I, 'I have seen the

Malay.' 'What Malay?' he asks, as quiet as could be, and swore nobody had been near him since he had come on the watch."

"And what do *you* think about it, William Dean?"

"As far as the Malay is concerned, sir, I *don't* think about it; I am sure of it. As to the other, I don't wish to get any man into trouble, though Murdoch's no mate of mine."

"Quite right. You can keep a still tongue in your head, I know. Now, say not a word to anybody, but send the first mate here at once."

Mr. Redmayne was now first mate in Mr. Marston's room, the vacancy caused by Bates's degradation having been filled up by Arthur White, the midshipman. He was but a young hand for such a place, and indeed there was no one now save Mr. Redmayne and the surgeon on whose authority and judgment the captain could rely.

Within ten minutes Mr. Redmayne had started, with eight men armed to the teeth, to make the circuit of the island to search for canoes.

If the Malay was really in Faybur, he must have come by boat, in spite of the heavy weather. Such light vessels as were used in Breda could of course be carried up from the shore and hidden in the bush, but hardly, unless carried by many hands, without leaving some sign of their passage on the sand. To search the island itself before daylight was useless.

A little before midnight the party returned without result. No canoe had been discovered, but at

the north end of the island, opposite Breda, there were indentations in the sand which some thought had been caused by the hauling up of a canoe, and others not. They were very indistinct, and the question was whether they had been rendered so by design, or whether the marks were solely accidental. The next day the whole island was thoroughly investigated by scouting parties, who came upon the distilling apparatus which had been the cause of so much evil, and destroyed it; in view of which achievement the expedition could hardly be said to have been labour in vain; but no trace of any alien visitor was discovered. Upon the whole, the captain was inclined to think that William Dean's Malay was made of the same material as furnished for others Mr. Marston's ghost; but, like a wise man whose motto is "No risk," he caused the night rounds to be more frequent, practised beating to quarters to such perfection that every man was at his post in a few seconds, and enacted that two men instead of one should always keep watch at the look-out.

A few days after these arrangements had been made, Mr. Redmayne and Mr. White had the good luck to come upon what would at a sea-side place at home have made the fortune of the locality; a bay of shells, or rather a bay of sand beneath which lay such a treasure of shells as only a child's imagination could have pictured. They were of all sizes, some of them reaching to such proportions that a single one would in our English gardens have sufficed for a grotto, and of the most splendid

colours. In hue, indeed, they resembled nothing so much as those gorgeous sea anemones which line, as with precious stones, the Gouliot caves in Sark; or those too brilliant mushrooms which a benevolent society has painted for us in colours and labelled "edible," without finding a human being with the courage to touch them.

The two discoverers, though by no means given to "gush" over the wonders of nature, were carried by the spectacle into unaccustomed regions of speculation. "How strange, it seems," observed the newly-promoted midddy, "that things so marvellously beautiful, and so fitted to delight the eye, should be covered with sand!"

"Depend upon it, everything is ordained for the best," returned Mr. Redmayne gravely. "Think what a pleasure it will be to Miss Edith to discover them for herself! At the same time I wish—while Nature was about it—that the bay had been placed a little nearer to the camp."

It was, in fact, almost at the northern extremity of the island, at the very place where Edith had met with such rough treatment from the distillers, where the cliffs were the most sheer and the vegetation most luxuriant. It was nothing of a walk, however, to one like herself, in the highest state of vigour, to which, thanks to the exhilarating climate and her wholesome mode of life, one of her sex could attain, and the attractions of the place, as Mr. Redmayne had foreseen, were overpowering to her. He himself had piloted her to the spot, where her pleasure at the spectacle gave him ten times

the enjoyment he had experienced when beholding it for the first time, but she was never weary of visiting it, no matter who were her companions. When it was possible, however, Mr. Redmayne always made one of her escort, a privilege to which, under the circumstances, he thought he had a reasonable claim. The expedition was rather beyond Aunt Sophia's pedestrian powers, and she contented herself with gloating over the shelly treasures her niece brought home with her in such profusion that their little home soon resembled some haunt of the mermaids.

One morning Edith started for "Shell Bay," as it was called, as usual accompanied by the prince and the first mate. On their last visit a strange bird of uncommon size had been seen hovering over the spot, and Mr. Redmayne had therefore provided himself with a musket, peace having so long reigned at Faybur that the edict against the waste of gunpowder was in some degree relaxed. At the moment of their departure, however, his presence was required in connection with the storage of some dried provisions; while hardly had he hurried off, when a message from the captain, requiring the personal services of the prince in respect to the yam plantation, which had been established under his auspices, took away Edith's remaining escort.

As both her companions promised to rejoin her, however, directly the public service had been attended to, she saw no reason for postponing the pleasure she had promised herself. They could travel, of course, much faster than she could, and

would probably overtake her before she reached the bay. The road took her by the look-out, where, as it happened, Murdoch and Mellor were on duty. They saluted her respectfully, but she returned the civility with coldness and very hurriedly; she distrusted both the men, and had a firm conviction that the guilt of Mr. Marston's murder lay at Murdoch's door. The sight of him was hateful to her, and dashed her spirits, though it was so far satisfactory to know that his duties for the day would prevent him from coming across her on her proposed expedition. Hardly had she passed them, when one of them cried out to the other; she looked back and saw the flag descending the staff—a piece of carelessness in him who had charge of it which might well have aroused the reproof of his companion. Nevertheless, she noticed on surmounting the next hill—where she stood still a moment to rest herself—that the flag still remained half-mast high, as though the halyards had got twisted.

CHAPTER X.

THE BLOW-PIPE.

THE day was a most lovely one even for Faybur, and the sea, which had recently been of milder mood, was showing even more pronounced signs of calm. In a few days at farthest there would be arrivals from Breda; the coming of the king had little interest for her, but she looked forward with some excitement to the visit from Majuba which Tarilam had promised her, so soon as the fine weather should set in. She had a great curiosity, mixed with a certain apprehension, to see what Majuba was like. "I hope," Aunt Sophia had said in her simple way, "that she will not be tattoed everywhere, or have feathers in her hair."

This was not very likely, but it was not impossible, and Edith felt that any trace of savagery in Tarilam's sister would be a shock to her. She was thinking of this and of matters generally connected with her present life, in a manner which some months ago would have seemed impossible; the old life had not passed away from her, for now and again it returned to her with great force and distinctness of regret, but it had been marvellously superseded by the new. Though so much that had

made up what we call home was wanting in it, Faybur had become in its way a home to her. This was a substitution less difficult to effect in her case than in another's, since what makes home most worthy of the name had long been unknown to her; the central figures round the hearth in place of father and mother had been those of her uncle and her cousin, of whom, dead and gone though they were, she could not trust herself to think, because they had been her Charley's enemies. Had any one near and dear to her remained in England—thus she reflected upon the matter without daring to say to herself "Had Charley been alive"—this transference of her home sympathies would have been impossible. But, in truth, she no longer looked upon this island with alien eyes. (It did, in fact, hold all she could be said to love; for though we love the dead, it is in another fashion.) Its incomparable scenes of beauty, while they still fascinated her, had grown familiar; her observation of nature had become extraordinarily acute, though it fell far short of that of Tarilam. She knew the trees by the music which the wind evoked from them, the flowers by their perfume, and even the herbs by the fragrance they emitted beneath her tread. The sea only was strange to her; it was not like that ocean of which she had had so bitter an experience; those unknown islands in the horizon gave it a certain mystery from which she shrank.

To-day they seemed nearer than usual, and Breda, of course, the nearest. She had no wish to visit it; the idea of so doing filled her with vague aversion,

which the prince, having perceived, had henceforth forebore to speak about his home. It was curious that while he so willingly gave himself up to self-reflection, Edith avoided it; one of the reasons which had caused her to welcome so trifling a matter as the discovery of the shells was that it gave her occupation; she disliked being left, as now, to her own company and her own thoughts. If they reverted to the past, they distressed her; if they concerned themselves with the future, they were equally hopeless, though necessarily more indefinite. She preferred to live in the present, from day to day, without retrospection and without forecast; a state of emotion in direct contrast to that to which she had formerly been accustomed.

She was glad, therefore, since she had not been rejoined by either of her late companions, when she found herself at her journey's end. It was not much to do, but it was better than thinking, to disinter from their sandy beds these splendid shells, almost as valuable in a European mart as precious stones, and ten times more beautiful. Of their scientific names—if, indeed, they were known to science—she knew nothing, nor even the terms applied to their formation; she did not even know the difference between a crenated and a dentated shell; but she was charmed by their exquisite loveliness or their imperial splendour. Some were diaphanous, and, being held up to the light, disclosed secret chambers, "pavilions of tender green"; others, though opaque, resembled pyramids of glowing flame. She was pushing away the sand from a specimen which

struck her as being lovelier than the rest, when suddenly she became aware that she was not alone; two figures which had suddenly emerged from the reef of rock to northwards, were making towards her with great speed.

In her extreme surprise she made no attempt to escape, which, indeed, must have been utterly futile, nor was she very much alarmed, since from the look of the men she took them at first for the prince's two attendants; but as they drew nearer she perceived that, though dressed in similar attire, and probably of the same race, they were not the men she knew, and were armed with clubs. With noiseless swiftness they ran up and seized her arms, and each, placing a hand behind her, began to impel her towards the spot from which they came. She neither assisted their movements nor resisted them, but was borne along in silence; the whole transaction seemed to her a kind of hideous nightmare, in which she had no volition. As they rounded the reef, however, they came face to face with the Malay, whom she recognized, while beyond him, some quarter of a mile away, was a canoe drawn up on the sand. Then at once it flashed upon her that nothing less than her abduction was intended, and she uttered a bitter cry of distress and despair.

It was echoed, or so it seemed, from the top of the cliff, which in that furthestmost bay was as sheer as the precipice where Mr. Marston had met his death, though somewhat more closely hung with creepers. Down this pathless steep was fluttering something winged and white, like a bird with a

broken wing. She scarcely recognized it for what it was, so incredible did it appear that any human being should venture to descend that airy steep, yet something within her whispered "Tarilam." She had eyes for nothing save that terrible descent, which was apparently accomplished in safety. Still, against three men, two of them little inferior in stature to himself, what, though he had reached the bottom unharmed, could even his prowess effect? She felt that he was about to rush towards her, and, unarmed, precipitate himself upon her captors, two of whom carried clubs, and the Malay a long knife. Then he would be slain before her eyes, and the sacrifice of his priceless life would have been made in vain.

No sooner did he touch the ground, however, than he ran like an arrow, not toward herself, but in the direction of the canoe. A cry of alarm burst from the three men, who perceived his object more quickly than she did, and the Malay and one savage darted forward to prevent his carrying it into effect, while the other snatched up Edith in his brawny arms and followed after them at scarcely less speed. The canoe was much nearer to her captors than to Tarilam, and though his swiftness was such that he went three feet to their two, they reached it first. As they stooped to launch it, however, he was within a few yards of them, and, stooping suddenly, took up a huge stone. They dropped their burthen, and the Malay drew his knife from its sheath, and the savage a little instrument from his bosom—it was a blow-pipe.

Tarilam made a feint of throwing the stone at them, which caused them to jump aside from the canoe, at which he instantly aimed it. It struck the frail bark in the centre and shattered it to atoms.

Then he turned back and flew at the man who was carrying Edith. The savage put her down, but twisted his hand in her long hair, by which he grasped her firmly. He looked at the broken canoe and the coming foe and gnashed his teeth; all means of escape were cut off from him, and he read aright in the prince's eyes a sentence of immediate death. Something, however, was still left him—vengeance. He raised his club and was about to brain his defenceless and half-fainting captive, when a sharp report rang out from the cliff top, and a bullet crashed through his brain. He fell, and would have dragged Edith with him but that Tarilam's arm was already around her waist. She clung to him, but he gently untwined her arms, and placed her so that his form interposed itself as a shield between her and a new danger. At the report of the gun, which, it is needless to say, had been thus opportunely fired by Mr. Redmayne, the Malay had instantly dashed across the sands into the woods; but the remaining savage, while equally recognizing that the fortune of war was against him, and even doubtless crediting his enemies with supernatural assistance, entertained no thought either of flight or submission. A gesture of astonishment at the noise and smoke of the musket, and the fatal effect upon his comrade, had been extorted from

him for the moment, but he had immediately recovered his presence of mind, and with malignant deliberation was advancing towards the prince and Edith with his blow-pipe at his mouth. It seemed strange that such a little toy should excite in so dauntless a breast so intense an apprehension as Tarilam now exhibited; not, indeed, on his own account, since he so freely offered himself as a mark for it, but no hen threatened by hawk ever exhibited a more passionate anxiety to protect her little ones than the prince now manifested to screen his charge. His nostrils dilated with terror, his bronzed face took a hue more near to pallor than would have seemed to be possible; he stood like one who sees hovering o'er his head the very angel of death, and listens perforce to the beating of her wings.

Once more the musket rang out from the cliff top, but this time without effect; it was fired from a lower elevation, but the marksman in the act of descending by a zigzag route, as quickly as the nature of the ground permitted, had not taken so true an aim; the savage half turned his head at the report, and on looking again towards his intended victims beheld Tarilam within ten feet of him, a flying incarnation of rage. The next moment both were on the ground, their hands on one another's throats, in a death grapple. It did not last long; Edith knew that it could not. She watched it with horror, but not so far as Tarilam was concerned with apprehension; man to man a struggle with the prince she was well convinced could have but one

ending. Presently he rose, leaving his adversary stretched motionless on the ground, and staggered towards her. She flew to meet him, and in her turn strove to support his tottering form. "Has he wounded you, my prince?" she cried, with passionate solicitude.

"No, dear, he has killed me," he answered with a smile. "Tarilam is swift, but not so swift as an Amrac arrow. The woorali poison is in my veins."

"Oh, Tarilam, dear Tarilam, what is to be done?" she cried despairingly. "There must be *some* thing. Think, think! what *can* I do for you?"

"Kiss me," he murmured with exquisite tenderness; "that is all I ask. Kiss me, Edie," and with that he fell fainting on the sand.

CHAPTER XI.

IN HOSPITAL.

THE first mate came hurrying up, as Edith, on her knees upon the sand, was covering the brow and cheeks of the unconscious prince with kisses. "He is dying," she said, with a terrible calm, in answer to his look of amazement; "in shielding me from the dart he has sacrificed his own life."

Mr. Redmayne stooped down and drew forth the little weapon which had entered Tarilam's side, just below the waist.

"Such a bodkin as this can never kill a man," he observed, with ill-concealed contempt.

"It has been dipped in woorali," she said.

Mr. Redmayne uttered no reply, but his face spoke for him. He had heard enough of the poison to know that she had pronounced a sentence of death; his handsome cheek burned with shame because he had grudged her kisses to a dying man. He looked round for help mechanically, though he felt that all help was unavailing. The noise of the gun-shots, echoed by the hills, had been heard from a great distance, and some sailors were seen running towards them; amongst them the man Rudge was conspicuous; he was in ill-favour with the

authorities, both on his own account as well as on that of the company he kept, and was not wont to show himself useful in any emergency; but now he was the first to run and offer his services.

"It is that scoundrelly Malay who has done this, I reckon, sir," he said, with a glance at the broken boat and the two dead savages.

"Never mind who has done it for the present," was the officer's cold reply; "the question is, can the mischief be repaired? Let the swiftest runner among you go back to camp and fetch Mr. Doyle. Bid him bring wine, brandy—any spirit with him—at once; though, indeed, it is all too late, I fear, even as it is."

"If *any* spirit will do, sir," said Rudge, hesitating, "I have something here. It was given me by them as will make no more of it, because the 'stillery has been destroyed; but as it *was* made, I thought it was no harm to keep it, sir."

Mr. Redmayne snatched the bottle from his hands, applied it to the mouth of the prince, whose teeth, already closed, he with difficulty forced asunder. The crude, strong liquor had an immediate effect upon the patient, into whose cheeks it brought back the ebbing life. It was a case where brandy *could* save one—at all events, for the moment; and but for that timely draught Tarilam would certainly have been numbered with the dead.

It was strange, as Mr. Redmayne afterwards reflected, that the prince should owe his existence to that scoundrel Rudge's disobedience to orders and

general complicity with evil-doers; but to those who are greater observers of human affairs, or more given to speculate upon their issues, the circumstance will not perhaps appear so abnormal as it did to the first mate of the *Ganges*. Whatever his perplexities, he perceived, however, clearly enough, not only that it was no time for reproof and the assertion of discipline, but that the offender had earned his pardon for all offences in the past; and, indeed, from that moment Mr. Richard Rudge was on the side of "order."

Enough men had come up to bear the prince upon a hastily-formed litter upon their shoulders, back to camp, a journey which was necessarily tedious, as they had to make the circuit of the coast. He complained of the want of air, which seemed surprising since a fresh wind was blowing, and Edith walked beside him fanning him with a huge leaf. She spoke not a word, but kept her eyes fixed upon his face lest the expression of a wish should escape her. Whenever he opened his eyes, which he did at longer and longer intervals, they fell upon her, and when they did so his lips never failed to smile. Towards the end of the journey, however, these signs of life ceased to manifest themselves. As they drew nearer home the tidings of what had happened drew many out to meet them, including the captain and the doctor. To the former the news of the Malay's presence on the island and of the attack of the savages were necessarily of the gravest import, but his anxiety on account of public affairs did not prevent his feeling

the greatest sympathy for the prince and his condition. "If he lives, Miss Edith," he said, with deep emotion, "we shall all be proud to call him our friend; if, as I greatly fear, we are to know him no more, he has died like a man, and better than many a Christian."

This speech, intended to be comforting, had quite an opposite effect on the person to whom it was addressed; not from its reference to the probably fatal effect of the prince's wound, but from its patronizing tone.

In Edith's eyes, Tarilam would not only die, but had lived "better than many a Christian;" for most Christians act only "up to their lights," whereas he had acted far beyond them.

Mr. Doyle's grave look and ominous silence gave her a yet deeper pang.

"Is there no hope?" she murmured.

"While there is life there is hope," he answered, then perceiving her young face grow gray in blank despair, he added compassionately, "the proverb is not quite so comfortless in this case as usual, Miss Edith; the effects of the woorali poison are, it is true, almost always fatal, but they are also immediate. An animal as tenacious of life even as the bear has been known to be killed by it in a few moments. That the prince has any life in him at all, therefore proves that the conditions are for some reason or other more favourable than usual."

"Perhaps the poison was not fresh, and therefore less powerful," murmured Edith eagerly.

The surgeon shook his head. "That would make no difference. It has been known to be kept for years, and yet retain its intense activity."

"What is woorali?" inquired Edith with a shiver of abhorrence; the subject was loathsome to her, but she had a dim idea that by encouraging the surgeon's mind to dwell on it he would be more likely to hit on some remedy.

"Well, it is a sort of gum or resin, pressed from the plant of the same name. Of its effect upon the human constitution you may judge from the quantity of alcohol the patient has imbibed since his wound without its affecting him, notwithstanding that he is wholly unaccustomed to spirituous liquors."

"Does he suffer?" whispered Edith. She had scarcely heard the surgeon's words; her eyes, if she had turned them towards him for a moment, had reverted with terrible persistency to the wounded man.

"No actual pain; but he labours under great oppression. The poison affects the respiratory organs, and those only. You are quite right to fan him. Nothing more can be done till we get him home."

They got him home at last, where they found everything ready for the reception of the patient. Whatever was wanting to Aunt Sophia in other places in the way of judgment or discretion, was never wanting to her in the sick-room. Well might the two women congratulate themselves on having provided for "hospital cases" in Ladies' Bay, since

they were thus enabled to do the best that could be done for one so dear to them.

When Mr. Doyle had made his examination of the wounded man, he sent for both of them. Tarilam was lying on the couch, with his eyes closed, and breathing with great difficulty.

"As you will be my only assistants," said the surgeon, "it is well you should know exactly what is to be hoped for. If our patient dies, it will be literally for want of breath, and we must endeavour to supply it artificially. Bring me your ivory bellows, Miss Edith." This miniature instrument—utterly useless, of course, at Faybur—hung on the wall of the little parlour by way of a drawing-room ornament; some school friend had given it to Edith "for luck" on one of her birthdays, but hitherto, as the poor girl had often reflected, very little good fortune had come of it. The time had arrived, however, when she was to have a higher opinion of the simple gift.

"My idea is," continued the surgeon, "that by injecting air very gently into the nostrils, so as to prevent its reaching the œsophagus, and then by applying as gentle a pressure to the chest to expel it, we may prolong life till the lungs recover their natural functions. That, at all events, is our only chance, and, as it happens, not all the hospitals in Christendom could prescribe two better operators in a matter so delicate than yourselves."

The two women listened as though the words of the surgeon had been inspired.

Edith brought the instrument, but her hands

trembled so excessively that she was unable to follow Mr. Doyle's instructions; Aunt Sophia, therefore, took that task upon herself, while Edith applied pressure to the patient's chest, at regular intervals, as the surgeon directed her. It was the same system now in use for the resuscitation of the apparently drowned, but which was discovered long ago by an East Indian surgeon whom Mr. Doyle had known, in connection with the curare (or woorali) poison. He had himself once before tried it, but without success, but this, of course, he refrained from mentioning. In that case he had only a pipe wherewith to inject the air, a service the bellows performed much better.

For a long time no result followed from the treatment, which was supplemented by the occasional administration of brandy. The feeble flame of life thus strangely fed continued still to flicker, and that was all, yet under the circumstances, as the surgeon was well aware, it was a good deal. Looking at the matter from a scientific point of view, and judging by precedent and analogy, Tarilam ought by rights to have been a dead man. Had he eaten a hearty meal just before he had been attacked by the poison, there would have been (speaking professionally) an excuse for his having survived for a quarter of an hour or so; but this he had *not* done. It was true that his constitution was as wholesome and vigorous as ever inhabited the human frame, but against the virus of woorali that would have availed as little as a linen robe against a rifle bullet. Had the dart struck

him, as it had been intended to do, in the chest, or, indeed, anywhere save beneath the waist, nothing could have saved him; but his whirlwind rush had disturbed his enemy's aim, and depressed the course of the weapon. The woorali has this attribute, and this only, in common with snake poison—than which it is far more deadly—that if swallowed it is comparatively innocuous; and except for the injury effected by the mere passage of the arrow, and which would have destroyed nine men out of ten in his place, Tarilam was in the position of one who had taken the poison internally.

Every now and then the women intermitted their ministrations for an instant, while Mr. Doyle applied his ear to the patient's chest; but the result was always disappointing. He only shook his head and motioned them to go on again; if it was not an actual chamber of death, it was next door to it.

At last Edith looked up and whispered—

"Mr. Doyle, he breathes!"

"Do you really think so?" he answered, incredulously.

"Think so!" As if she had not been listening with ears more keen even than the trained senses of the surgeon for the least sign of returning life! As if with every gentlest pressure of her hand upon his heart she had not been on the watch for the slightest responsive movement! The surgeon's examination was brief, but satisfactory.

"We have got over the worst of it," he said, with a great sigh of relief, "and shall soon set the

poor fellow on his legs." This, of course, except metaphorically, was very far from being the case; but from that moment the patient began to mend apace. As he did so, curiously enough, Edith Norbury spent less and less time in his society. She, who had literally hung upon his lips, and had passed hours in restoring life and motion to them, now only looked in to ask after his progress; she even left it to Aunt Sophy to read to him, a task she had often taken upon herself of old as his instructress. This puzzled the patient, who, though by no means complaining, once spoke of the rarity of her visits in the presence of her aunt and the surgeon.

"You should be well content with her, my man," said Mr. Doyle, "though she were never again to say so much as 'How are you?' for she has been nothing less than the breath of life to you."

"That is very true," he answered gently.

The surgeon took it for granted that he had been made aware of the particular service Edith had rendered him, but to Aunt Sophia, who knew better, Tarilam's remark was full of significance.

When the surgeon left, she did not dare to pursue the subject, notwithstanding the natural attraction it had for her. She could not help feeling for the prince, whom she credited with a hopeless passion for her niece, but she had no intention of assisting him. That he should entertain such an attachment indeed, no longer shocked her. She almost confessed to herself that the devotion he had shown to the girl deserved a reciprocity of

affection. But, after all, it was out of the question that a girl brought up as Edith Norbury had been, with an experience, too, of a tender passion that had run in the ordinary channel, should "take up" (as Aunt Sophia expressed it to herself) with a man who had never been christened, confirmed, vaccinated, or even been acquainted with the rudiments of civilization. Edith's conduct since their patient had mended, it was true, was suspicious, but it might arise from a motive the very reverse of that which she hardly knew whether to fear or hope—the desire to put an end to the familiarity which his illness had necessarily engendered.

His two attendants had been already despatched, at some risk, on the canoe to Breda, to summon Majuba as soon as the state of the weather permitted her to join her brother; and Edith would probably be well pleased to see his sister take her place by the convalescent. If Tarilam should speak to her upon the matter which she had no doubt was occupying his thoughts, it would place her in the most embarrassing position, and to divert his mind from it, Aunt Sophia began to talk hurriedly of the first thing that occurred to her, which happened to be the woorali poison.

"I suppose," she said, "you knew in what the dart had been dipped directly you received your wound?"

"I knew before it left the blow-pipe," he answered smiling. "I would have given all I had, directly I saw it, to be like Robert Ray" (the boat-

swain, a man of exceeding bulk), "that I might have made a shield of myself for Miss Edie."

"Then the Bredans use poisoned darts themselves," observed Aunt Sophia reproachfully.

"Some of them," he said, with a flush. "They know no better," he added; the excuse he always gave for any custom of his people which incurred the disapprobation of the two ladies.

"I wonder why Providence permits the existence of such a dreadful thing as woorali," observed Aunt Sophia, soliloquizing. "It can never intend—that is countenance—the destruction of one's fellow-creatures by such means. What can be the good of it?"

"It is good for kings," remarked Tarilam, simply.

"For kings?"

"Yes. It is not meet for members of a royal house to grow very old, so as to become dependent upon those about them for the smallest service; it brings authority into contempt. When the hand can no longer hold the hatchet, nor the eye martial the warriors, nor the ear listen to the prayer of our people, it is time for us to depart. Then the woorali is good."

"Do you mean to say you kill yourselves?"

Tariam inclined his head.

"It is the same when we are very ill, or when shame or misfortune overwhelm us. I had a sister who loved an Amrac man; she could not give him up, so she gave up her life. The prick of a thorn, thanks to the woorali, will do it. This is our remedy," he held up a finger, through the nail of which showed a brown speck of infinitesimal size, "in case

evil fortune should take us unawares. If Tarilam were captured by the Amracs to-morrow, they would have only a dead man to boast of."

"What! Do you actually carry the hateful stuff about with you, like a pinch of snuff?"

Tarilam looked puzzled, the metaphor was unintelligible to him.

"Enough to cover a thorn's point only," he answered, as though the crime lay in the quantity.

Aunt Sophia looked at him with horror, almost with aversion. If he had ever had any chance of securing her as his ally in the matter next his heart, he had lost it.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EXECUTION.

WHILE Tarilam hovered between life and death, strange and stirring events were taking place in the island, of which it was quite as well that the two ladies, occupied with nursing cares, were kept in ignorance. The captain, indeed, had given directions that these matters should be carefully concealed from them. The solitudes of Faybur, which had never echoed to the cry of hound or note of horn, became the scene of a man hunt. Half the camp turned out to beat the woods and scour the hills for the Malay. That there had been treachery at work, in which some of their own people were concerned, was only too probable, and it was felt to be imperative that the man should be taken at once, and the whole truth extracted from him. To this end, orders were given that no fire-arms were to be employed, and no violence used beyond what was absolutely necessary to effect his capture.

Never had the fair island been so completely investigated; its fairy dells and sparkling waterfalls, its lustrous bowers and archways blossom-hung, were explored with the utmost minuteness, but by eyes that brought with them no sense of beauty.

All were filled with indignation against the wretch who had attempted so cruel an outrage against an unoffending girl, and, unprovoked, had brought enemies into their very midst. They moved in a long line, like beaters in search of game, that lengthened or contracted with the conformation of the island itself, but was never so extended as to allow the object of their search to slip through them undescried. It was probable that he would be in hiding at the northern end, both as being most remote from the camp and nearest to any possible help from his Amrac friends, which the increasing calm rendered more practicable, though still hazardous.

No precaution, however, was omitted from first to last. As the hunters proceeded, their line, closing up in the centre, while the flanks which took the bays, where the walking was comparatively easy, pushed forward, took the form of a crescent, and resembled a huge net, the ends of which are being dragged to shore; it was impossible that any one thus enclosed could escape. Every moment the excitement increased, and each man advanced with increased eagerness, in hopes to be the first to set eyes on the man whose discovery had now become so imminent. Suddenly, from a ravine near the shore, there rang out a pistol-shot.

"Steady, men, steady!" cried the officers, apprehensive that the line should break and the men run in.

"Who has been hit?" inquired the captain, appealing from a crag top to a knot of sailors clustered together around some object below him.

"None of us, sir," replied a voice; "it is the Malay."

"Who shot him?"

"Matthew Murdoch."

"Disarm that man and tie his hands."

Ere the captain could reach the spot his orders had been obeyed. The Malay was lying on the grass breathing heavily, and bleeding from a wound in the breast. When he saw the captain his face lit up with an eager gleam; it was evident that he wished to make some communication to him. He was unable, however, to speak. Mr. Doyle came up, and, kneeling by his side, applied some restorative.

"What is it you want to say, my man?" said the surgeon kindly; he felt no more good will towards him than the rest, but he knew, which they did not, that he was dying.

"Murdoch—traitor," murmured the Malay.

"You hear that, men?" said the captain, with stern face. A hum of indignation rose round the group, which had now grown of considerable size.

Murdoch stood with a guard on each side of him, bound, with a face the colour of lead. "It is a lie!" he muttered hoarsely.

"We will hear you presently; this man's time is short," observed the captain drily. "Mr. Doyle will continue the prisoner's examination."

It struck the speaker, ignorant though he was of legal matters, that if he should be called upon to punish Murdoch he ought to have no hand in bringing his guilt home to him.

"In what was Murdoch a traitor?" inquired the surgeon. "Tell us the truth and only the truth."

"Amrac."

"It was with his connivance, you mean, that you came over here from Amrac with the two natives?"

"Yes."

"Then it could not have been for the first time. How often have you crossed the sea before?"

"Two times."

"Then the first time you arranged with Murdoch what should be done on the second occasion?"

"Yes."

"Why did you want to carry off Miss Edith Norbury?"

"Amrac—goddess."

"You persuaded them that she was a goddess, and that the possession of her would be of great advantage to them?"

"Yes." There was a look of satisfaction in the Malay's face, strange indeed to see there at such a time. The intelligence of his interlocutor was smoothing away for him difficulties which in his condition might well have seemed insuperable. If the inquiries were of the nature of "leading questions" there was no one to object to them on that account. It was justice and not law which all had in view.

"How was it that you and the two Amrac men found out where to find the young lady?"

"Murdoch," answered the dying man, less faintly than before; the mention of the name of the man who had shot him seemed to lend him vigour.

"But he could not have told you that on the occasion in question she should have been alone."

"Flag-staff."

The surgeon looked round inquiringly.

"Who has had charge of the flag-staff this week?" observed the captain.

"Murdoch and Miller, sir," replied Mr. Redmayne.

"Just so; go on, Mr. Doyle," said the captain gravely.

"Murdoch made some signal, did he, by which you were to know when the opportunity for carrying out your purpose had arrived?"

"He did."

"Was there anything else arranged between you beside this particular matter?"

"Amrac army—Faybur."

"Do you mean that an army from Amrac was to invade the island?"

"Yes."

There was a cry of smothered rage from the whole assembly. Every one glanced at Murdoch, and some of them pointed at him menacingly with their cutlasses.

"Steady, men, steady!" cried the captain, but his voice failed for once to restore order.

"He would have had us butchered by the savages!" cried one. "Let him hang at the yard-arm!" cried another.

"Silence, men!" cried the captain imperiously, "unless you would have me believe there are more

mutineers than one amongst you. Proceed, Mr. Doyle. We are wasting precious time."

They were indeed. The dying man was almost at his last gasp.

"Was there any one in the island besides Murdoch," inquired the surgeon, speaking even more distinctly than before, "who was assisting you in your designs?"

"Yes."

A movement of sensation pervaded the crowd.

"What were their names?"

There was no answer.

The mental powers of the dying man, it was plain, were leaving him fast; the effort of framing words foreign to his tongue was too much for him. "Look round and tell us whether there are any traitors here besides the man you have mentioned."

The Malay cast his filmy eyes around him. The spectators shrank from that faltering and feeble gaze; if there were any that had cause to fear it on their own account, it is probable that, alive to such a contingency, they had withdrawn themselves out of sight. At all events, his gaze failed in finding what it sought. The Malay's head fell back and the eyelids closed. Then once again his mouth opened. "Murdoch — Murdoch," he murmured hoarsely; and over his stiffening face there swept a vindictive scowl, which settled down on it in death.

By the captain's orders they dug a hole in the sand in the neighbouring bay, and buried him there

by the side of the two natives of Amrac, who had shared his enterprise and his fate. Then they returned home with their prisoner; the captain, with bent head and thoughtful face, gloomily leading the way and giving the time to the rest of the party, which, as some of those who composed it whispered to themselves, resembled a funeral march.

Arrived at the camp, the sentinels were summoned from their posts by the boatswain's whistle, and the captain, looking very grave and grim, addressed the whole assembly, the prisoner, with his hands still bound, standing within a few feet of him, his eyes fixed upon the ground.

In a low but distinct voice the captain narrated, for the benefit of those who had not been present, all that had just happened, dwelling with great particularity upon the Malay's statements. "That man," he said, "was not bound to us by any community of race or creed; he was not of ourselves; he was our enemy, it is true, and intended, by his own showing, to bring destruction upon us by the hands of cruel and savage men; he would have carried away by force an innocent girl, from whom none of us have received anything but kindness, and surrendered her to a fate worse than death among barbarians. That was not his intention, perhaps, but failing, as she would necessarily have failed, as the possessor of the supernatural powers they looked for, she would sooner or later have become their victim. For this he has paid, and justly paid, with his life. Still, he was not a traitor—as this man is."

Here the speaker paused, and a hoarse murmur of hate and rage broke forth from the throng.

The captain held up his hand, and shook his head.

"The man is here for judgment," he cried, "but not for violence; he shall be punished, but not a finger of yours shall harm him, nor a drop of his blood be laid at your doors. I have no more doubt than the sun is shining that Matthew Murdoch plotted our ruin with that man; how or where I know not, though some of you—I would fain hope a very few—have cognizance of that matter. Let them beware for the future, for, so help me Heaven, I will spare none of them. I say, that this man is guilty there is not a shadow of a doubt. Why was it, when he went to seek the Malay, that, contrary to orders, he took a pistol with him? It was with the object—which he carried out—of shooting the man down before he should divulge the secret of their confederacy. Fortunately, however, he lived to do so. We have heard from his dying lips that Murdoch was the accomplice of his villainy; that, while on duty, he used that very flag yonder, which has been planted in the feeble hope of helping us to regain our home and friends, to further his traitorous designs. In almost all crimes there are some mitigating circumstances, but here I can see none; in almost all criminals there is something to be said for them, but not for this man. What is his record since he came amongst us? He was the first to break the law that we had made for our protection in the matter of the liquor casks.

He was one of the few who set their wicked wits to work to undo what we had done for the common good by distilling spirits. And now he has betrayed us. A mutineer, a drunkard, and a traitor, what good can be hoped for in such a wretch? What evil may not reasonably be expected? If he plots against an innocent girl, if he joins hands with savages to bring war and ruin upon you—his comrades—what good, I ask, can be left in him? Let him alone, I say; leave him to justice. Officers, draw your swords."

The crowd, goaded to fury less by the catalogue of his crimes than by the recital of his conduct towards themselves, were on the point of running in upon the prisoner. It needed all the efforts of the two mates and of the midshipmen to restrain their fury.

"I do not recall these things," continued the captain, "to arouse your wrath, but to justify my own action. You have elected me to be your chief; it is my duty to see that our little community is not further endangered by the presence of this scoundrel amongst us. Moreover, he has committed murder."

"Yes, yes; it was he that killed Mr. Marston," cried several voices.

"If so, that is a matter for which he will have to account before the Great Judge," said the captain solemnly. "We ourselves have no proof of it. With our own eyes we saw him shoot the Malay. As mutineer, as traitor, as murderer, I doom you, Matthew Murdoch, to death."

The word was followed by a pistol-shot fired by the captain himself. Matthew Murdoch leapt into the air and fell on the sand—a dead man.

Prepared as was the crowd for the sentence, the catastrophe took them by surprise. There was a moment of "hushed amaze," which the chief actor in the terrible scene perhaps took for disapproval.

"His blood is on my head," exclaimed the captain, "and not on yours."

"You have done quite right, sir; if you had not done it we should have done it ourselves," exclaimed one.

"Shooting was too good for him," cried many voices.

"Is the man dead, Mr. Doyle?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir."

"Then God forgive him, and me also if I have done wrong in killing him. Let him be buried with all decency, but at once."

Deeply moved, the captain turned towards his tent, the men making way for him bare-headed in token of the sympathy they felt for him. This feeling, however, was not absolutely universal. On the outskirts of the crowd two men were discoursing together in a low tone upon what had occurred.

"A deuced high-handed proceeding, that," observed Mr. Bates.

"Better to keep that opinion to ourselves, however," replied Mellor, cautiously. "If our mates here knew what Murdoch knew, the whole pack would

turn on us and tear us to pieces. We may be upsides with them, however, one day yet."

Mr. Bates shook his head and ground his teeth.

"No, we can do nothing in that way now without the Malay. But I'll be even with Captain Henry Head, if I have to wait for a twelvemonth."

CHAPTER XIII.

“YES.”

“It was not till the day after the execution (if such it could be called) of Matthew Murdoch that the two ladies were informed of its occurrence, and it made a profound impression upon them. They were not only shocked at the fact itself, and the depth of depravity that it revealed in the criminal, but it seemed to reveal to them an abyss of lawlessness and license hitherto undreamt of, and on the verge of which they saw themselves standing. They recognized for the first time that the kindness and respect with which they had been invariably treated by the sailors must—in some instances, at least—have been feigned; and even in others, where there had been no feigning, how much of it, they now began to wonder, was to be set down to the influence of an authority which itself was built on but slender foundations. The captain and his officers were, they knew, as true as steel; but supposing that the community which had invested them with command should be induced, by whatever means, to deprive them of it! What all women desiderate is a natural protector, and these women, who stood in so much more need of one than most,

had none. They were not alone in the world, but worse—alone and *out* of the world, where the forces of civilization cease to act in their favour. Their present was insecure, their future was pregnant with danger. If Murdoch's treachery had been successful, what might now have been Edith's fate! There was only one person to whom they could look for certain and lasting aid. In Prince Tarilam they had both the utmost confidence; the affectionate regard they felt for him was, they knew, fully reciprocated, and he had a nation at his back. But what a nation! Where his strength lay, lay also his weakness. Welcome and attractive to them as was the prince himself, the two ladies shrank from all connection with his belongings; the young midshipman's account of his friends in Breda, though intended to be eulogistic, had been far from captivating them. They had great misgivings even concerning Majuba, of whose arrival they were in hourly expectation, and what they had heard of her fellow-countrywomen was by no means to their advantage.

Aunt and niece did not discuss these matters in so many words, but they knew what was passing through each other's minds in reference to them almost as well as if they had done so. Narrowed as their lives had become, there was no room for reticence. Having exhausted the sad subject of public affairs, "Do you think that Tarilam will leave us now he is getting better, Edie?" inquired Aunt Sophia, hesitatingly.

"Leave us!" returned Edith, with much surprise, "why should he leave us?"

"Well, when his sister returns—and I don't suppose she will stop here long—he will wish, I suppose, to return to Breda with her."

An expression of pain came into Edith's face; any allusion to Breda was distasteful to her; her companion, however, mistook the cause of her distress.

"We shall miss him dreadfully, shall we not?" she continued. "He is certainly very nice. What a charming disposition he has; what tenderness and what unselfishness!"

"Yes," replied Edith thoughtfully—

"How young he seems in the old age of Time,
How green in this gray world."

"I forget where the lines come from, but he always recalls them to my mind."

"Poor fellow!" murmured Aunt Sophia pityingly.

It was significant that Edith did not ask why her companion pitied him, but maintained a thoughtful silence. The other did not break it, but presently left the room with noiseless step, to attend upon her patient—if, indeed, he could any longer be called so.

More than half-an-hour passed by, during which the girl never altered her position, her elbow on the window-sill, and her face fixed on the cliff, which stood up sheer in front of her. The room was very small and at the back of the house, the larger parlour, with its splendid sea view and plentiful supply of air, being now given up to the sick man. There was nothing in the prospect to divert her reflections,

which, indeed, would not have been easy to disturb. At one time she thought she heard a distant shouting and some stir in the neighbouring camp; but it did not excite her interest. There are times when the world without, with all its goings on, seems of no account, and nothing seems real save our own dreams. Suddenly, however, she became conscious that the door had been softly opened and closed. Aunt Sophia then had returned after her visit, and had doubtless found matters progressing favourably, as was expected. As she did not, however, take her seat, and set to work with her needle as usual, Edith glanced over her shoulder with a look of mild surprise, which instantly altered to one of extreme astonishment.

Standing in the centre of the little room, with her hands folded in front of her, her eyes downcast, and an expression on her face of reverential admiration, stood a most beautiful girl. She was dressed in flowing robes of white, which were prevented from contrasting too sharply with her bronzed and glossy complexion by the intervention, wherever they met the skin, of wreaths of scarlet flowers. In her jet-black hair there was indeed but one, but round her neck and wrists there was a profusion of them; yet such was the good taste of their arrangement, that so far from their causing her to resemble a May-day queen, they had all the grace of ornament. What struck Edith most, however, in the appearance of this beautiful apparition was her extraordinary resemblance to the prince; except for her deficiency in height and length of limb, she

might have been Tarilam masquerading in girl's clothes.

"I need not ask who you are," said Edith gently, as she rose and welcomed the new-comer; "your likeness to your brother assures me that you are Majuba."

As she uttered her name the princess fell on her knees, and seizing Edith's hand in both her own, devoured it with kisses. Though there was nothing abject in this demonstration of gratitude, it was nevertheless embarrassing.

"I cannot help thinking," said Edith smiling, "that though I have recognized *you*, you have made some mistake in *me*. I have done nothing, I fear, to merit——"

It was probable that her visitor had but a limited understanding of the words addressed to her, but their meaning was borne in upon her at once.

"I have seen him," she interrupted with simplicity. "Tarilam has told me all about his darling."

It was only too obvious to Edith that the term was one which the prince must have assigned to herself without any thought of its repetition, and that his sister simply used it in default of any other appellation of affection; there was nothing for her, however, but to ignore it.

"Then he told you that I owe him my life," said Edith, steadfastly.

Majuba looked puzzled and smiled with open lips. "He told me that you saved him two times," she explained; "once from the thunder gun, and once in the council of the warriors."

"Nay, it was Tarilam who saved *me*, first from the shark and afterwards from the Amrac arrow."

"Yes, and from the arrow," persisted the princess. "He told me that you gave him life." Then suddenly she added in a whisper, but with tenderest emphasis, "Yet what is life, my darling, without love?"

Edith blushed from brow to chin. "I do not understand you, Majuba," she said, coldly.

The princess shook her shapely head and sighed. "Oh yes, you understand me. The language of the heart is common to all; even an Amrac girl knows when love is speaking to her. What good is it to have saved Tarilam before the chiefs with your tongue, if you say 'No' with your tongue afterwards, and kill him?"

"Majuba, you give me pain," said Edith, gravely. "It is impossible that your brother could have told you to speak to me thus."

"He never did. Why should there be words between us? Am I not his sister? I can read his heart, as you can read the books," and she placed her hand on one that lay near to her.

"And how is it you talk about reading books and speak the English tongue so well?" inquired Edith; the girl's proficiency, in truth, astonished her exceedingly; but her question was suggested less by curiosity than by the desire to get away from the topic that had been so unexpectedly forced upon her.

"Deltis taught me," answered Majuba, simply, "and since he went away I have had the interpreter for my tutor."

A thought passed through Edith's mind that Master Conolly's teaching might have been of a sentimental character, and had put ideas into the head of this child of nature which would otherwise have been foreign to it.

"I am afraid Deltis sometimes talks nonsense, Majuba."

"He talks as the bird sings; it is pleasant to hear him. Tarilam, too, used to be happy like the birds; now his heart is sore, and his speech is sad."

"He has been ill," said Edith gently; "the poison has injured him. I have nursed him when he knew not what he said."

"Tarilam knows now," returned the girl decisively. "He loves you."

"He does not; or if he does it would make *my* heart sore to hear it."

"That is what he told me," rejoined the other simply. "Tarilam would never speak his thought to you; that is why I have come to speak it for him."

"Then you come in vain, Majuba; it is useless."

A film of sorrow fell like a veil on the girl's pleading face; the tears were very near her eyes, but she controlled herself by a strong effort. She seemed to be collecting all the scanty stores of argument that lay in her artless mind.

"Breda is so strange to you," she said, laying one forefinger upon the other, like one who is checking off adverse chances; "we are very rude and

ignorant. We must seem to you as the people of Amrac seem to us; alas! alas! we are but savages; it would be, you would say, to stoop too low."

"Nay, nay, I am sure you are no savage, Majuba," put in Edith earnestly, "nor Tarilam either. You shall be my sister, and he shall be my brother."

Majuba shook her head decisively, as though to dismiss that arrangement as altogether insufficient and unacceptable.

"Listen, my darling," she said. "In Breda there is a district which is *taboo* save to people of the Royal blood. No one comes thither without our permission. We are as much alone there, when we wish to be so, as though we were in another world. Did not Deltis speak to you of it?"

Edith signified that he had done so.

"My brother has only to speak and the king, our father, will make you *taboo* like ourselves. Tarilam will marry you, and you shall live alone with him in a world of your own."

Edith shook her head.

"Or, if you prefer Faybur," continued Majuba eagerly, "and the society of your own people, Tarilam will stay here. There is nothing he will not do, or which he will not leave undone, to win you. If you knew him as I do, my darling," she added, with a touch of pride, "it would not be to stoop so very far."

"It is not *that*, Majuba," answered Edith, greatly moved. "There are other reasons, believe me, which make what you have in your mind a thing impossible."

The princess answered nothing, but with a quick movement plucked the blossom from her brow, and all the flowers from her neck and wrists, and flung them in a heap upon the floor.

"Hush! he is coming," she said.

The door opened and admitted Tarilam. His step was slow and his limbs trembled; he had lost flesh during his illness, and his face was worn. He glanced at Edith, and then at his sister. "Leave us, Majuba," he said, in a broken voice. The girl cast one look of tenderest appeal towards Edith, and obeyed him without a word.

"I am come to say good-bye," he murmured in faint tones. "My father has come for me."

"But you are not yet fit to go," she answered gravely. "You must get well and strong first."

"Why?"

The simple monosyllable had a pathos in it which the other in vain attempted to ignore. It seemed to say, "Why should I get well? What is there now left for me to live for?"

"That is a foolish question, Tarilam. Sick people must get well before they leave the hospital. Ask the doctor or Aunt Sophia."

"Aunt Sophia says that since you can never care for me, it will be better that I should go."

"Aunt Sophia had no right to say that," said Edith quickly. It was well enough that she should decide for herself against taking this man for her husband, but she resented its being decided for her; it was a matter altogether for her own judgment.

"Was she wrong?" cried Tarilam eagerly. Then

his face fell and his voice faltered. "But, no, I had forgotten Majuba."

Edith looked at him inquiringly. "My sister has been pleading for me, has she not?" he continued gently; "she threw away her flowers in sign that her prayers had been unanswered. It is no wonder. Tarilam has been too presumptuous; forgive him."

He held out his hand with a sad smile. It was not to wish her good-bye, but, as she well understood, in token of amity with which he always associated that unfamiliar act. She hesitatingly gave him her fingers, which he lightly held in his own without clasping them.

"There is nothing to forgive," she said, "there is nothing in your proposal which is presumptuous." Her tone was thoughtful, and gave the impression—or rather would have given it to any one better acquainted than her companion with the English tongue—of carefulness, of weighing her words. She was not greatly agitated by the peculiar circumstances of her position; it had been too long and too often reflected upon for that.

He looked at her with mild surprise unmingled with hope.

"If it be not that Tarilam lies there" (he pointed to the ground), "and that you are yonder" (he pointed upwards), "what is it that keeps us asunder?"

"The knowledge that I do not love you as you deserve."

"Tarilam has no deserts. A very little love would suffice him."

"But alas! I have no love to give you at all. It is all gone, sunk in the depths of the sea yonder."

"Deltis told me of that," returned the prince softly, and with a reverential inclination of his head. "Death has taken from you the man you loved, and no one can fill his place. When one goes out in our canoes in a storm it is disastrous to lose the paddle; the hand is but a poor substitute, yet it is something. I know that I should be but the hand. You would never love me as you loved the other. It is not to be expected. Tarilam would be content with less than that."

There was no answer. Edith's hand still lay on his own; her silence encouraged him to press it a little. "As to him whom the sea has taken, I know I can never be his rival. He will always have the first place in your heart. I say again, it is but to be expected. Only in one thing I shall not be his inferior."

She smiled faintly.

"What? You think that impossible even in one thing? No, Edie, it is not, for however he loved you he cannot love you more than I do; in that I shall be at least his equal. You loved him very much, and you will only love me a very little; yet my love for you will always be as great as his. It is worthy of you, though I am not. I will not wrong it, therefore, by saying, take my love such as it is; will you take *me* such as *I* am?"

Her reply was almost inaudible. If it could be said to be an acceptance of his offer at all, it was

one which seemed to adopt his own self-depreciating conclusions. Edith sighed rather than said "Yes." That modest realization of his hopes seemed, however, amply to suffice for him; he drew her towards him gently and with infinite tenderness, and kissed her forehead. It was less like a betrothal than the sealing of some compact agreed upon indeed by both parties, but in very different degrees of acquiescence.

CHAPTER XIV.

FAMILY TIES.

TARILAM stood for a while in silence, looking at his betrothed with grateful wondering face, like one who cannot believe in his own happiness.

Then when she did not speak, but only looked thoughtfully before her, like one who reflects on something she has done, and already half repents of it, he said softly, "If there is anything at any time that I can do to make you happy, be sure it shall be done, Edie. If, because I am dull and rude, I cannot guess any wish of yours, as at this moment, I entreat you to let me know it. If you fear that the expression of it will hurt my feelings, dismiss that fear. If you cannot love me yet, as I hope you will do some day, at least trust in me."

"I am thinking, Tarilam," said Edith, slowly, acknowledging this artless and devoted speech by a fleeting smile, "that for the present I would wish what has just passed between us to be kept secret."

"It shall remain where it is—in Tarilam's breast," he answered, touching it, "till you give him leave to speak of it."

"No; that would be impossible," said Edith. "Aunt Sophia must know and Majuba—they have earned the right to know."

Here she paused. What she wanted to convey was that she wished Tarilam to abstain from making any change in his behaviour towards her till such time as she should think proper to make their engagement public. It was only due to her aunt and Majuba, as she had said, that they should be admitted to her confidence; nay, it was certain indeed in any case that they would soon discover what had happened for themselves; but with respect to all others outside of Ladies' Bay it would be possible to keep it secret. So far from being ashamed of her lover she was proud of him; she knew that his nature was as noble as his intelligence was keen; that his mind was as full of grace and beauty as were his form and features; but she shrank from what those of her own race, his inferiors, would say of this matter. In this there were many parallels to her own case; a daughter of some house of Mammon, who falls in love with a poor poet or painter, may hold him far above her own kindred in everything that constitutes merit, and yet be conscious of the disdain they feel for him, and recoil from the expression of it; and all the more because she perceives it, from their point of view at least, to be not wholly unreasonable. That, sooner or later, all the companions of her exile must become aware of her engagement was obvious; but there was no need for its immediate publicity. In due time she would tell the captain; but as for the rest, they might very well be left to find it out for themselves. Master Conolly, though he had great claims on her regard, was much too volatile to be

intrusted with such a secret; while, as to Mr. Ainsworth and the doctor, and Mr. Redmayne—

“May I tell the king, my father?” inquired Tarilam gently, interrupting these reflections.

The question, though under the circumstances a most natural one, filled her with dismay. In the prince’s company she often found herself forgetting that he was a prince, and still less did that fact suggest itself now that he had become her lover. As to the monarch of Breda (though at that moment he was, as it happened, under her very roof), he had for the time been utterly left out of her calculations. So altogether different was the young fellow from his parent, that she seldom associated the one with the other. And yet this amazing personage was about to become her father-in-law. To tell him what had taken place was in all probability to tell everybody; though as to the Bredans generally, it was indeed of small consequence. If he approved of it they would receive the news with blowing of conch shells, and if otherwise, with some equally simple manifestation of disapproval; but that her own people should first hear it from such a source would be a circumstance very distressing to her.

Tarilam scanned her face while these thoughts passed through her mind as a mariner scans the skies, but with a less fallible judgment, because he had love to guide him.

“The mouth,” he said, “of our kings in Breda is closely shut; matters of peace and war they discuss with their chiefs, but things which concern the Royal house are kept to themselves. When I have

said to him, 'Father, I pray you not to do this,' never has it been done. He has been very good to me all my life, and denied me nothing save what would have been harmful. The good of his people is, as it should be, nearest to his heart, but after that comes his son. I owe to him all that I possess of good. I should like to tell him—if I might—how happy you have made his son."

"It is only reasonable," she answered gently. "But how can you be sure, Tarilam, that the news will please him?"

He looked at her with an undisguised amazement that spoke more plainly than the most extravagant expression of admiration. "My darling, has he not seen you?" A reply which certainly deserved the smile with which Edith received it.

"He will not now insist upon your returning to Breda, will he?" she inquired. It was but a feeble specimen of that banter which lovers are wont to use to one another, but Tarilam appreciated it to the full.

"He will insist on nothing, dearest," he answered fondly. "It was only because I had been ill that he suggested my returning home, and he will perceive at once that the air of Faybur is, under the circumstances, much more suitable to my ailment."

"Is he really so kind?" said Edith naïvely.

"You shall judge for yourself. He is waiting for me in the next room. May I tell him?"

A faint smile gave him the permission he sought, and with a grateful glance at her he left the room.

Never surely did wooer meet with such reluctance from one who had promised to become his bride, or bore it with more patient tenderness. Tarilam well understood, however, that this did not arise from any doubt of his devotion, or from the absence of at least a reciprocal regard. He had, in fact, the same difficulty to deal with that exists in so many similar instances, namely, the "incompatibility" which so often exists between the object of a man's choice and his own relations; only in his case the matter was aggravated in an unusual degree. It is not civilization, nor even education, which renders intelligible to us the feelings of other people when antagonistic to or out of accord with our own, but an absence of egotism and a natural love of justice. Tarilam was gifted with both these virtues, and therefore in no way resented Edith's disinclination for his people. On the other hand it was impossible, in his ignorance of the prejudices of race and creed, that he could thoroughly understand her position, and far less those objections which she well knew would be raised by others. However well her countrymen got to know him, nay, even should they recognize the virtues which she had discerned in him, the consciousness of the source from which he sprang would (she felt) be never absent from their minds or cease to cast its shadow.

It was doubtful if even the loyalty of Aunt Sophia would stand the strain that the news of her engagement would put upon it. To her, above and before all, she owed the revelation of it, but it had

so come about that she was about to make it in the first place to another, and him the very last she would have chosen to be its recipient. It could not be said that Edith Norbury repented of what she had just done, but she recognized in that moment of suspense and embarrassment, the commencement of an endless chain of similar situations.

Then the door opened and disclosed the Bredan king. With noiseless step, and a certain tender dignity, he moved to where she stood, and laid his strong hands lightly upon each of her shoulders. She looked up without shrinking into his face, on which there was a smile that well became it.

"Good, good," he said. "My son has chosen well, and Taril is happy."

Edith drooped her eyelids and murmured something, she knew not what; and when she raised them again the king had gone, and in his place stood Aunt Sophia with outstretched arms, into which she flew like a bird to its nest.

"Don't cry, don't speak, dear Edie," she whispered tenderly, as she clasped her close; "only feel that you have done as I would have had you do, and are dearer to me than ever."

It was an observation open to some cavil as an expression of cordial congratulation, but nothing more welcome to Edith's ears could possibly have been uttered. She did not need felicitations but approval.

"I really do love him, Aunt Sophy," she sobbed.

"Of course you do, my pretty one," put in the other quickly; "only not quite so much, you were

going to say, as he loves you. The thing is not possible. Any man so devoted I never saw. If he had his will your life would be one rose-leaf without a crumple. You should have heard him impress upon that dear old king that he was not to stay more than two minutes with you. He is a queer father-in-law, it cannot be denied, but I am sure he will be a very kind one; and you're never to see him, nor any friends of the family, unless you please—a most exceptionally favourable arrangement, you must confess. Then, as for Majuba, she is quite an acquisition to us, and I believe will really be a comfort to you. She only lives for Tarilam, and Tarilam only lives for you, so that you are the mistress of the whole situation; upon my word, dear, all things considered, I think you are a very lucky girl. I do, indeed. Under the circumstances, I think you have done the very best thing you could have done for yourself, and the *right* thing."

"That last should have come first, Aunt Sophy," said Edith, with a faint smile. "It is only natural, however, that you should think I stand in need of some excuse."

"That was not my meaning, dear; no, I think you have done right independently of all expediency, and I am sure that will be Captain Head's view and Mr. Ainsworth's. What a fortunate thing it was, by the bye, that Mr. Ainsworth's life has been preserved to us."

The colour flew to Edith's pale face. "I hope you will not speak to Mr. Ainsworth or any one

else at present of—of what has happened,” she said earnestly.

“Very good, dear; since you do not wish it, I certainly will not,” replied Aunt Sophia; it was a serious blow to her to be prevented from telling such news, under circumstances where even the smallest gossip had a fancy value; “of course you are the best judge of your own affairs, but will it be quite fair as regards other people?”

“What people?”

“Well, of course there is no obligation; you have a right to do as you please; but it would be more merciful to somebody to put him out of his misery at once. Of course, I have always known that he had no chance; but I am afraid he still clings to hope.”

“I really do not know who it is you are talking about.” The tone of the speaker was incisive and displayed unmistakable annoyance.

“Well, of course I meant Mr. Redmayne,” returned Aunt Sophia, apologetically.

“Then you had no right to mean him,” was the quick reply; “he has never addressed a single word to me which could be even construed as you suggest; I have never regarded him otherwise than as a friend.”

“I am quite sure you have not, dear,” replied the other humbly; “but still I thought you must have known—that is, suspected—”

“I have suspected nothing of the kind,” interrupted Edith; “my thoughts have never concerned themselves with any such matter.”

It was possible that in so speaking the speaker "did protest too much"; it is doubtful whether any woman is quite unconscious of the admiration she excites in a man with whom she is familiar enough to call him friend; but Edith was certainly speaking truth as regarded any reciprocity of affection upon her own part. Upon the whole, however, the imputation was not a circumstance to be deplored; it gave her a certain vigour—if it was but that of repudiation, the energy of a disclaimer—of which she felt herself to sorely stand in need.

There ensued a pause which received a welcome interruption in the entrance of Majuba. She flew, like a school-girl, into Edith's arms, and embraced her tenderly. "My sister," she murmured timidly; "now indeed may I call you sister!" then fell upon her knees as though entreating pardon for a familiarity that had possibly given offence. Edith put aside the lustrous hair that hid Majuba's brow and kissed it. "You must not kneel to me," she whispered, "sisters are equals."

"No, no, no," answered the girl, deprecatingly; "all I ask is to be loved by her who has made my brother happy, ah, so happy!"

Then her eyes lit upon the flowers which she had plucked away when she had despaired of such an issue, and with infinite grace and quickness proceeded to replace them about her person.

"Is the king, your father, gone?" inquired Edith, not in apprehension; for, companioned by this simple and affectionate creature, she felt that an interview

with the monarch of Breda would be no longer so formidable.

"Oh yes, they are all gone," replied the girl, putting the last flower in her hair with the least touch of coquetry. "Did you not hear the conch shells?"

"Gone! Where are they gone to?"

"Well, to Breda first, I suppose, and then to Amrac," she answered carelessly. "My father has asked the captain for assistance against our enemies, and he has lent him men and muskets. It is possible the fleets may meet this very day, but, whether the contest is by sea or land, it can only end one way; the Amrac people cannot fight against your thunder and lightning. They will never again dare to come to Faybur and try to carry you off to their hateful island."

"But you don't mean to say that Tarilam has gone with the rest?" cried Edith, starting from her chair. "He, just risen from a sick bed, to take a voyage, perhaps to fight! Why, it will *kill* him!"

She spoke with such anxious vehemence that Aunt Sophia hastened to interfere with—"Of course he has not gone, my darling; Majuba is mistaken."

"No, no," cried the girl delightedly; "it is *you* who have been mistaken. Is it not clear, since she fears for him so keenly, that she loves him with all her heart?" The ruse—if such an artless device could be so termed—appeared to her so eminently successful that she clapped her hands in childish glee.

To Aunt Sophia, however, it was not quite so

satisfactory; in the first place, it involved a reference to a previous conversation, which she would certainly have preferred to be treated as confidential; and, in the second, the deduction drawn from it seemed by no means convincing. It seemed to her that Edith's anxiety on Tarilam's account might have arisen naturally enough from her interest in him as a patient. To Majuba this was a reflection that had not arisen. For while love is common to the human race, philanthropy is a product of civilization.

CHAPTER XV.

ILL NEWS.

THE alliance between the castaways and the Bredan nation, which had been disclosed to Edith with such startling suddenness, had been brought about by no means so abruptly. The king, accompanied by a few canoes, had landed as before, leaving the main body of the fleet at the back of the island, but his meeting with the captain, though friendly, had been marked with a certain stiffness and reserve. He thanked him for the kindness shown to his son, but once assured of his convalescence did not, according to expectation, demand to be led to him; contenting himself with sending Majuba to her brother, he remained in camp, asking his usual questions about this and that—though not, as before, through his interpreter, whom he had apparently left in Breda—but always with a distrait and preoccupied air which filled his host with vague disquiet. At last the captain sent for Conolly, which he had hitherto foreborne to do, lest he should wound the king's *amour propre*, who had evidently a good opinion of the progress he had made in the English tongue, and that young gentleman soon made matters clear, which might have otherwise remained inexplicable.

The real cause of the difficulty was, in fact, what the captain would certainly never have expected, namely, the king's extreme delicacy of mind; the same chivalrous scruples which had on a previous occasion caused him to keep his fleet out of sight of his new friends, now prevented him from asking a certain favour of them which he had in his mind. He thought it would look ungenerous so to do, since his request, under the circumstances, might appear too like dictation; and being unable to express it in such terms as would make it excusable, he had forborne, notwithstanding its urgency, to prefer it at all.

"What right have I, Deltis," he said in his own tongue, "to ask your people to help me to make war against a nation with whom they have no quarrel?"

This explanation was even more acceptable to the captain than he thought it judicious to admit; wherein it must be confessed that the Bredan king had the advantage of the British captain in chivalry. So far from having no quarrel with the people of Amrac, the attempted raid of their nation on Faybur was a distinct *casus belli*, and an outrage the captain was extremely willing to avenge, and to send the king a dozen men with as many muskets to act as allies to the whole Bredan power was a method of discharging his obligation—both friendly and hostile—as agreeable as could possibly be conceived. The Malay, it seemed, had quarrelled with his hosts, and found their neighbours, the Amracs, more to his liking; and no doubt it was to his influence that their conduct was

owing. It was by no means certain, however, now he was dead, that they would cease from acts of hostility; and in any case there would be a great advantage in taking the initiative.

Volunteers were at once invited for the proposed expedition, and the call was almost unanimously responded to. Eighteen, all steady and reliable men, were selected, and since diplomacy as well as generalship might be in request, Mr. Redmayne himself was placed in command. For the same reason, Master Conolly, whose value, by reason of his recent linguistic acquirements, were very much above the ordinary quotation of the article "midshipman," was also included in the party.

There was a little luggage to be stowed away, since no one knew how long the expedition might last, and some arrangements to be made, so that Majuba's statement that "all had gone" was not quite literally correct. Aunt Sophia and Edith, with their patient, who looked very interesting, but, for a young warrior who was deterred by circumstances from taking part in a fray, in disgracefully good spirits, came down to the shore to add their farewells to those of the rest. There were no presentiments of evil, for a speedy and complete victory could be reasonably counted on for the allied forces, but the parting had nevertheless its pathetic side. It was the first time that any considerable portion of the castaways had been dissevered from the main body.

"You will acquit yourselves like Englishmen, I know," said the captain, addressing his little contingent, "notwithstanding that how you do so may

never be known at home." Whereupon they gave him three ringing cheers by way of assurance.

The parting between the king and his son was dignified but full of affection. Master Conolly took a laughing farewell of the ladies, and treated the whole affair as an excellent joke. Mr. Redmayne's tone was more serious, as behoved one on whom a grave responsibility rested. In bidding Edith good-bye he expressed his hope that all would go well with her in his absence.

"You leave me in safe hands," was her smiling reply, which referred, of course, to the captain. No sooner had the words passed her lips, however, than she felt her face aglow, for she remembered that Tarilam was standing close behind her, and that her speech might seem to bear another meaning. Her consciousness of her new relations with the prince no doubt suggested the apprehension; yet it was strange (as she often afterwards thought), since the matter was one on which he could hardly entertain a doubt, that Mr. Redmayne answered, "I hope it may be so." Perhaps he had seen something in his rival's face that betrayed his victory; but it is certain that he turned upon his heel, as if to avoid taking leave of him, and stepping briskly into the canoe that awaited him, never turned his eyes to shore again. His departure, after what Aunt Sophia had so indiscreetly said of him—even apart from his manner of leave-taking—was, without doubt, a relief to Edith; nor—as this time there was little probability of danger befalling him—did she, on the whole, regret the absence of the young

midshipman; he was accustomed to run in and out of their dwelling like a pet dog, and it would have been hard to conceal her secret from his sharp eyes.

From henceforth the inmates of the little house in Ladies' Bay might be considered as a family party. If absence makes the heart grow fonder, nearness too, where the heart can bear inspection, has a similar effect, and of no man could it be said with greater truth than of Prince Tarilam, that the more one knew him the more one got to like him.

The nobility of his nature manifested itself in a thousand ways, but in nothing more than in the delicacy with which he pursued, but forebore to press, his suit. It was amazing to Edith how soon she found herself at her ease with him, for she was conscious of being carried into those smooth waters by no great efflux of love. Majuba, no doubt, played a most useful part in bringing this about; a more unselfish and gentle creature never existed, and though she herself was limited in her affections, and lived, as it were, only for a very few people, she had an unusual appreciation of those natures which have wider range. She even contrived in time to make the topic of the king, her father, interesting to Edith. It was impossible not to admire those simple and generous motives which she ascribed to him with such dutiful eloquence. She painted him with the warmest hues of affection, but not so much as her father as the father of his people. Devoted as she was to Tarilam, and in-

tensely proud of the adaptability he showed in learning accomplishments which were utterly beyond her horizon, she estimated still higher those qualities of the heart which it was her simple faith he had inherited; she admired him most as her father's son.

"In a word," said Aunt Sophia, after one of these outbursts of enthusiasm, "Tarilam is a Prince of the Blood;" a term the magniloquence of which, perhaps, at least as much as its justice, so tickled her, that she always alluded to him by that title, in spite of Edith's laughing remonstrances. A while ago the girl would have been seriously annoyed by her so styling her lover, which seemed to throw into relief all that was bizarre and anomalous in her own position, and it was significant enough that she could now afford to smile at it.

The definition of the verb "to be in love," notwithstanding all the marvellous attributes ascribed to it, is a difficult one; in spite of its monopolizing effect, it is like most other things, a matter of degree, and, moreover, it "grows upon one," as the phrase goes, at least as often as it leaps, Minerva-like, *cap-à-pie* from the heart. Perhaps the most formidable opponent to a woman's love is her sense of inferiority in her lover. In most cases this is got over, as we see every day, by her investing him with imaginary merits; but in Tarilam's case there had been drawbacks to which it would have been impossible for Edith, even had she been enamoured with him from the first, to have shut her eyes. One by one these, however, were disappearing; his

lineage was now no longer an objection; nay, he even stood higher in her opinion from the very fact of his having broken "his birth's invidious bar," and shown himself so superior to his compatriots. He was fast acquiring knowledge and accomplishments at least equal to those possessed by those about her of her own people, while in all matters to which rivalry with them was now limited, he was literally *facile princeps*.

Even in our own high state of civilization, the gifts of mere strength and fleetness and of skill in all manly exercises, count for more perhaps than we are willing to acknowledge in a woman's eyes, and these Tarilam possessed in perfection. That he was of dauntless courage she had had proof; nor are youth and beauty, with propinquity, to be entirely left out of our calculations, however ethereal may be the view it is the fashion to take of this tender subject. Aunt Sophia, who was not a bad judge of such matters, presently discovered that though she was never permitted to feel *de trop*, her presence was not so necessary in the way of avoiding embarrassment to her niece, as it had been, and that she could leave the two young people together without much compunction. If her views on the subject, indeed, could have been confined to Ladies' Bay, nothing could have been more idyllic than the establishment there of Tarilam and Edith as man and wife, with Majuba and herself to keep house for them. Unfortunately, however, though their world had become very limited, it was not entirely confined to themselves, albeit just at present they lived as if

it had been. Deprived of the services of his first mate, and feeling the absence even of a midshipman from the scanty staff of officers now remaining to him, the captain had his hands fully occupied with the reins of government, and for the same reason Mr. Doyle, and even Mr. Ainsworth (who was always ready to assist authority), had little leisure for paying visits to the ladies.

It astonished them both, therefore, not a little when, as they were sitting at breakfast together as usual, with Tarilam and his sister, one morning, Captain Head presented himself.

All started up to welcome him, for he was a great favourite with every one of them, after their different fashions; to Edith especially he had supplied, as far as in him lay, the place of a father, and in her face there was some confusion, for he had seemed to her to regard her with a peculiar gravity, which her self-consciousness ascribed to the matter on which she had not thought fit to place in him a daughter's confidence. It was a relief to her that when he spoke he addressed himself not to her, but to the company generally.

"I am sorry, my friends," he said, in a tone of gravity and deep emotion, "to be the bearer of bad news."

"There is nothing amiss in camp, I do hope," exclaimed Aunt Sophia fervently; her apprehension centred for the moment in Mr. Ainsworth; to her just now he was the most important of their fellow-exiles. For though by custom in those days a ship's captain was fully competent, under special circum-

stances, to join two persons in holy matrimony, she felt in the case she had in mind, where so much of conventional requirement was wanting, the services of an authorized divine to be especially desirable.

"All is well in camp—with those that are left of us," returned the captain.

"Can it be possible then that the expedition has failed?" continued Aunt Sophia—this of course was the natural, however improbable, alternative; but the expression the captain had used—"those that are left of us"—to Edith's ear had spoken of worse than failure, and paralyzed her tongue with terror.

"The expedition has been successful," he continued, "so far as its object was concerned; your hereditary enemies, Prince Tarilam, have been defeated so utterly that they will not trouble you again for many a year, but the victory has cost your allies very dearly. We sent but two officers, as you know, and one of them is slain. Ladies, I know it will distress you very much to learn that we have lost Mr. Redmayne. He has been killed by a poisoned arrow."

Aunt Sophia burst into tears; she was grieved to the bottom of her heart, and yet there was a sense of relief to her in the miserable news. It might have been told of Conolly, whom she regarded with almost a mother's love; perhaps, too, there was a more selfish consideration, if that which concerns the interest of another can be called selfishness, which rendered Mr. Redmayne's loss the less deplorable of the two.

Though she did not weep, every trace of colour had fled from Edith's cheeks. "I am distressed indeed," she said in tearful tones, in which something of penitence as well as pity seemed to mingle; the thought of the dead man's last good-bye shot through her with a remorseful pang. Then, catching sight of the prince, who, deeply moved by her emotion, was regarding her with wistful eyes, and remembering how he too had nearly succumbed to the same deadly weapon that had slain the other, she suddenly threw her arms round his neck, and burst into tears.

It was a mere uncontrollable impulse, the significance of which, even when she had given way to it, did not occur to her.

Aunt Sophia, however, who, as is often the case, was wont to have her wits about her when others of keener intelligence might have been at a loss how to act for the best on the spur of the moment, at once beckoned the captain into another room.

"Your terrible news," she said, "has utterly upset my poor Edie."

"No doubt," was the dry reply. "Instinct, however, seems to have taught her where to look for comfort."

"You guess what has happened, then; well, it is true that my niece has consented to become the prince's wife. You who have been so kind and good to us would certainly have been the first of all our friends to hear the news, but she has told no one; she wishes for the present to keep the matter a secret. I hope you do not think she has

chosen ill; at least, you will not be angry with her," pleaded Aunt Sophia, for the captain's face was very grave.

"No, no; I was only thinking for a moment of my poor Redmayne, though I always knew that he had no chance. Angry with her? God bless her, why should I be angry?" He paced up and down the little room as though it were his quarter-deck.

"Edith's position is a painful and most peculiar one," put in Aunt Sophia gently.

"No doubt, no doubt. For my part, I have every reason for congratulation; for this takes a load of responsibility from my shoulders. It was pressing on me just now almost as heavily as my bad news. In Marston you ladies lost one friend, who would have stood by you to the death, and in Redmayne you have lost another; the few in whom you can really trust may now be counted on one hand, and I myself may be cut off any day. It is most fortunate, therefore, that the girl has found so kind and worthy a protector as this excellent young fellow. It is a pity, of course, that he is not an Englishman."

"Yes, indeed," sighed Aunt Sophia, to whom the recollection of Tarilam's nationality was always painful, however studiously she strove to ignore it.

"Well, there's always a drawback in these matters," said the captain consolingly. "If a girl's lover is young, he is sure not to have a penny; if he is rich, it is ten to one he is a fool; if he's clever, it's only too probable that he will turn out a rogue; and if he is a prince with all the virtues,

he's got a father who wears a bone bracelet and feathers in his hair."

This last statement was open to dispute, and even contradiction; but the captain made it with such an extremity of contempt in his tone as presupposed some cause of personal indignation, into which Aunt Sophia wisely forebore to pry.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EXPEDITION.

HOWEVER hesitating had been the approbation which good old-fashioned Captain Head had bestowed upon Edith's intentions, the discovery of them gave her strength and courage. In revealing her secret to him, though she had done so unintentionally, she felt that she had broken the ice, and though she still desired to keep the matter from the ears of the rest of her fellow-countrymen, the idea of divulging it gave her less distress of mind.

For the present, however, there was excuse enough for reticence in the calamity which had befallen the little community. As to the captain, in Mr. Redmayne he felt that he had lost his right hand, and all who had any sense of duty shared his opinion. The body of the young officer had been committed to the deep, but the shadow of his loss fell upon the survivors even deeper and darker than that of Mr. Marston had done, whom they had laid in his grave with their own hands. The young officer's nature had been brighter and more buoyant than that of his predecessor, and to many the isle itself seemed to have henceforth lost some of its sunshine.

Master Lewis Conolly was especially cast down by what had happened, and could hardly tell the tale to his comrades with the calmness and dignity befitting the sole surviving officer of the expedition. With the gentler audience in Ladies' Bay, notwithstanding that it included the prince, he made no attempt to conceal his feelings, which, so far from despising, Tarilam, indeed, appeared to sympathize with in an extraordinary degree. The news of the victory obtained by his people was naturally gratifying to him, but he listened to the boy's narrative with no trace of triumph, and with the sorrowfulness and seriousness of one who counts the cost.

The English had embarked in twelve canoes manned by native rowers, and with the rest of the fleet had reached Breda without molestation from the enemy. There they had put in for refreshments and reinforcements, and were detained by the state of the weather from their projected invasion of the Amrac country. It was not only very boisterous but wet, a circumstance always distasteful to the Bretons, and which was also of great inconvenience to the English from the difficulty of keeping their muskets dry. This enforced delay enabled the newcomers to make some acquaintance with the place and its inhabitants, of which Mr. Redmayne, in company with the young midshipman, took advantage. He thought it might be useful to them in the future, and possibly, if ever they returned to their native land, even of public service.

The island was long, but narrow, and well wooded, and only to be approached from the south

and west; in other directions it was surrounded by a reef of coral, in some places as much as twenty miles from the shore, and in none less than six. This reef acted as an immense breakwater, and rendered the sea thus enclosed almost always calm, which added to the sense of isolation with which the place impressed its visitors. There was no grain anywhere, and though grass was plentiful, since there were no cattle to consume it, it grew high, and was scorched and burnt up by the sun. There was no quadruped of any kind, and though there were cocks and hens in plenty, they were never eaten unless when in the egg, that is to say, no eggs were eaten when fresh, but only when there was a chicken within them.

The only bird ever heard to sing was the Deltis, whose pipe was as sweet as a flageolet, but curiously enough they never beheld one. The chief food of the natives was yams and fish—of the latter there was a great variety—but that in most esteem was the kuna cockle. The shell of it was enormous, and when diving for it—in which the people were amazingly expert—it would often take two men to bring up a single specimen. The only luxuries were sweetmeats, of which the natives were as fond as children. The one which had proved so distasteful to the young midshipman was made of the kernel of the cocoa-nut mixed with syrup extracted from the sugar-cane. Their only drink was the milk of the cocoa-nut, and they had no salt. There was no river in the place, but many streams and numberless ponds of exquisite clearness and beauty. Some

of these were set apart for bathing purposes. When any man's business led him near one of those appropriated to the other sex, he was obliged to make some particular "halloo," if and it were answered by a female voice, he could not go on, however urgent might be his affairs.

There was never any wrangling or fighting. Whenever a matter was in dispute, it was brought before the king, who sat in public every day to do justice. Every mark of distinction was paid to him; his chiefs approached him with respect, and his ordinary subjects when they addressed him always put their hands behind them, like pupils waiting before their master; even when passing any house where he was supposed to be, they never omitted this action of humility. The king's behaviour was always gentle and gracious; he listened with patience to all that was said before him, nor did any suppliant seem to leave his presence dissatisfied. When in council, messages were delivered in a whisper through some inferior chief, who, in his turn, addressed the monarch in a low voice, and always with his face turned aside. One punishment for evil-doers—if, indeed, any of such a blameless race could be so called—was "the king's censure," which exposed them to universal shame.

The prime minister, who never left the island, was next in rank to the king, and was always first consulted by him. He never bore arms, nor was he distinguished by the Order of the Bone. Neither Mr. Redmayne nor Conolly was ever invited to his

house, as they were to that of the other chiefs; he remained a mystery to them.

Here Conolly paused in his narration, which, perhaps, had more interest for Edith than he had any idea of, since he was describing a land that in all probability would be her home. He perceived that she was listening with attention, but it suddenly struck him that these details were not only well known to two of his little audience, but might seem impertinent and even disagreeable to them.

The prince, mistaking the reason of his silence, observed with a smile, that the prime minister was the wisest of the king's counsellors, and selected from the whole people because of his sagacity. His intelligence forbade him to accept any mere tokens of honour, as also the gifts which otherwise would have been showered upon him. His life was one of extreme simplicity, and the sole reason why he had not asked the Englishmen to his dwelling was, doubtless, because it was a mere hut, and therefore unworthy of their attention.

Conolly explained that it was not curiosity about the prime minister that had made him pause, but the reflection that what he was saying might seem an intrusion upon the prince's private affairs.

"Indeed," said Tarilam, with a gentle smile, "that is not so, Deltis; you are welcome to tell anything you have seen among my people, of whom, though simple and ignorant, I have no reason to feel ashamed."

"In truth, he may well say that, Miss Edie," said the midshipman, warmly, "for it is a fact, that not

only perjury, but falsehood of any kind is absolutely unknown among them. Moreover, though the Amracs use poisoned arrows, the Bredans do not do so from moral scruples, which, of course, places them at a great disadvantage in their wars with their neighbours."

"The advantage was on our side this time, at all events," observed the prince, with modesty, "for we had the thunder guns."

"Also," continued the midshipman, "the Bredans do not think it fair to make an attack on an enemy by night."

Then he went on to describe their weapons: the spears twelve feet long, for throwing, which could be launched with certainty for sixty feet; and the spears, eighteen feet long, for close quarters; the dart and the sling—the latter, a piece of wood with a notch for the dart to lie in; and their daggers made of the sting of the rayfish. Their canoes were all made of the trunk of a tree like the English ash, and those used in war were painted red both within and without, and inlaid with shells. The smallest vessels held five people, and the largest thirty-five; and anything more beautiful than the Bredan fleet when collected for the expedition, was never seen upon the sea. When the weather permitted it to start, it numbered more than two hundred canoes, on board of which were fifteen hundred men. In each boat there was only one spearman beside the rowers. On reaching the enemy's coast a small canoe met them bearing four men, each with a white feather in his hair, in sign

of parley and, as the English thought, of submission. This, however, was far from being the case. The chief of the Amracs demanded that certain injuries to their people committed by the Bredans should be redressed, but more particularly that they should give up all claim to the island of Faybur and its present inhabitants, including its goddess, whom it was the fixed intention of the Amrac nation to import into their own country as a guardian deity, to whom they looked for great prosperity. These terms being rejected, the Amrac fleet came out to give battle to the invaders.

With a view to make their victory more complete by waiting till the whole force was engaged, the English reserved their fire, and in the first discharge of arrows Mr. Redmayne received his death wound. On seeing him fall, the Amrac fleet set up a shout of triumph, which was answered by a discharge of musketry. The effect of it was amazing; the unaccustomed noise and the flashes of the fire appalled the enemy, and when they saw their people drop without apparently receiving a blow, and perceived that they had holes in their bodies in which no spear was sticking, they broke and fled in the wildest disorder. No less than a hundred canoes were sunk and fifty taken. The conduct of the prisoners, some of whom were of high rank, was curious in the extreme. The majority exhibited a stolid resignation, and, untying their hair, which was tressed in a huge bunch at the top of their heads, let it fall over their faces in token of submission; but the few who were distinguished by a bone

bracelet on their wrist defended themselves with the utmost obstinacy, and only in one case was one taken alive. This warrior had both his arms broken by musket balls, and when taken into Conolly's canoe never took his eyes from the midshipman's face; in all the pain of his wound, and in the prospect of immediate dissolution, seeming to be impressed by nothing so much as the colour of his novel enemy. There was no slaughter of the prisoners, but all dead, whether friends or enemies, were at once thrown into the sea.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INVESTITURE.

THE young midshipman's account of the contest, though it had its interest for all, was listened to with very different feelings by the members of his audience. Aunt Sophia regarded it with horror, not only as a picture of savage strife, but as a specimen page out of a book of life with which it was only too probable they might be one day more familiar. Edith showed little emotion, but kept her eyes fixed on Tarilam, as though the contemplation of his noble face was an antidote to what would have been otherwise revolting, and seemed to find in it the reassurance of which she doubtless stood in need. Majuba, though shrinking from the details of slaughter, wore a look of conscious pride, not only when the naval powers of her people were alluded to, but when the indifference to death manifested by the chieftains of her hereditary foes was dwelt upon.

"We too, you see, savages as you may deem us," her face seemed to say, "are not altogether devoid of heroism."

Tarilam listened to it with grave and philosophic face, as he might have listened to anything

else which had a foregone conclusion. He was thinking less of what was said than of its effect upon those who heard it.

"What has happened," he thoughtfully remarked, when Conolly had finished, "may seem deplorable, but it could hardly have been avoided. Even among civilized people I am told that war is not uncommon. In this war it was absolutely necessary to chastise a barbarous race who have always interfered with our peace and quietness. Thanks to the aid the captain lent us, there will be now peace in Breda for years to come."

"There is something in that," admitted Aunt Sophia, less interested in general principles of government than in their practical application to herself and her belongings. She had looked upon Amrac and its inhabitants as merely an item in that long list of "disagreeables" which she foresaw Fate had in store for them, and rejoiced that there was now at least one the less.

The idea may not have been without its weight with Edith, but her mind was much more made up than that of the elder lady as regarded her future. On the other hand, the claims of personal friendship were as yet far stronger with her than those of the country she was about to adopt as her own. In her heart of hearts she not only mourned Mr. Redmayne's loss more than that of all the Bredans that had fallen, but grudged it, as too great a sacrifice for the end accomplished. What was such a victory, what was even the national benefit conferred upon the victors, in comparison

with the violent death of one of her own race she had so long known and respected? Love, it is said, is beyond all things a partisan; but with Edith it had its limits in that direction. The prospect that awaited her could hardly be said to be a welcome one, but she had resolved to accept it, and almost to make the best of it.

Curiously enough, she found the greatest obstacles to contend with in what seemed matters of small importance. The ignorance of Tarilam's fellow-countrymen—which was after all their inexperience, and which, in the case of the prince himself, and even in that of Majuba, only gave the impression of a pleasing simplicity—affected her like a personal humiliation. The easily awakened ridicule of the sailors at the *gaucherie* and blunders of their new friends gave her exquisite pain. In uniting herself with one whom she firmly believed to be one of the noblest of men, she could not forget the race from which he sprang. The disgrace of ancestry is comparatively a small matter, except to very small minds, because its dishonour is invisible and lies in the grave, but in her case it met her at every turn. Only when alone with Tarilam or his sister could she forget it. Even the behaviour of the king himself, though she had learnt to admire his character exceedingly, filled her with confusion, which might well be termed “twice confounded,” for she was ashamed of herself for being ashamed of him.

An example of this of an unusually striking kind took place within a few days. King Taril came over to Faybur in great state to thank his

allies for the assistance they had rendered him. Nothing could have been more gracious or considerate than the manner in which he expressed himself. Passing by all mention of his own share and that of his nation in the late victory, he ascribed it solely to the English, and dwelt with regret upon the loss sustained in championing his quarrel. In feeling, as Aunt Sophia justly said, this untutored monarch was as true a gentleman as ever sat on a throne, but in practical matters he could only use such tools as lay to his hand. A philosophic mind might well have regarded the savage pomp surrounding him, and the slavish submission that was paid him by his ordinary subjects, with indifference, or even perceived in it precisely the same elements that make up the more civilized manifestations of respect for royalty; but upon Edith's mind, who was on this occasion an unwilling but indispensable witness of them, they jarred with a sharp sense of pain. The blowing of conch shells, the flourishing of paddles, the prostration of the oarsmen on the shore, and the bated breath with which even his nobles—always with averted face—addressed the king, had something to her of tragedy as well as farce. She could not watch the show as a looker-on, nor even with the comparative indifference of the captain, who on this occasion had a part to play in it himself, which he would very willingly, had refusal been possible without offence, have declined.

The king had announced his intention to award him the high order of "the Bone," an honour, as

has been said, only bestowed upon the greatest chiefs, and it was the knowledge that this greatness was to be bestowed on him, which had made the good captain so satirical when speaking of his Majesty to Aunt Sophia.

The investiture of a Knight of the Garter is not without its humorous features, which a consideration of the merits of the case may sometimes heighten, perhaps, rather than otherwise; but such a ceremony shorn of those externals which have so wittily been said to leave majesty "a jest," was ludicrous indeed. If Breda had possessed a "Court Journal," the ceremony would have been thus described.

The king and his nobles stood together apart, while the captain sat in front of them at a little distance; the king's brother advanced with the circlet and inquired of him which hand he used in common. This question was not, however, to be replied to verbally, which would have been contrary to etiquette. A stone was placed in each hand, with a request that he should throw it to a distance, and the ordeal having proved the left to be less in use, the left wrist was elected for the proposed honour. Unfortunately, however, the captain's frame was somewhat thickset, and the circlet, not being elastic, like a garter, had to be rasped away to fit it. Even then it would not go on. Strings were therefore attached to the captain's fingers, and his hand having been plentifully lubricated with coconut oil, the king's brother held him fast by the shoulder, and three nobles already decorated with the order, were set to work to pull at the strings.

The most profound silence was preserved among the natives during this trying ceremony, and was only once broken by the captain, who, as the magic circlet was painfully compressed on the joints of his hand, was heard to murmur, "Damn the bone!" The exclamation, however, was fortunately drowned in the shouts of applause that hailed the success of the operation.

Some men, we are told, are born to greatness; others achieve it; and others, again, have greatness thrust upon them. This last was, very literally, the captain's case. He had an Englishman's contempt for all distinctions conferred by any sovereign save his own. He did not look upon the ruler of Breda, however absolute and powerful, as a sovereign from the right mint, or even as a sovereign at all. He had an uneasy consciousness that the spectators of his own nation were with difficulty suppressing their mirth, and he was suffering acute physical pain.

Nevertheless, under these untoward circumstances, he had to listen with a grateful countenance to the royal congratulations.

"You will take care, I trust," said the king with dignified gravity, "that this token of honour is rubbed bright every day, and preserved as a testimony of the rank conferred upon you; and I adjure you to defend it valiantly and never to suffer it to be torn from your wrist save with the loss of life." A promise, considering what it had cost him to get it on, the captain had no scruple in giving with much effusion.

Edith watched the proceedings with feelings which she was utterly unconscious of expressing in her face, till she heard Tarilam whisper in her ear—

“It is a poor thing to give your captain, dear Edie, it is true; but it is the only thing we have to give.”

It was the first time that anything like a reproof had passed the prince's lips, and it touched her to the quick. She not only felt the pity for him that is akin to love, but the keenest remorse upon her own account; his assumption of authority—if so slight and indirect a rebuke could so be called—so far from being resented, was positively agreeable to her, not as a pious novice welcomes a penance, but as a symbol of domestic supremacy. If she did not look forward with effusion to the wearing of the marriage ring, she henceforth felt that the obstacles to her doing so were less serious; that it would slip on, at all events, with less difficulty than the captain's bracelet had done. She was not only resigned to her fate, but, so far as Tarilam was concerned, could even honestly call it her good fortune. Her affection did not indeed stand in need of increase; every day passed in his company seemed to reveal some new vein of gentleness and goodness in his character; it was her philosophy as regarded his belongings that required fortifying, and as it chanced this also had now happened to her at the very time when the tie of personal attachment was drawn tighter than it had ever been before.

The king and his nobles had accepted the

captain's hospitality for seven days, and his manner towards her was so kind and delicate, as well as obviously genuine, that she sometimes found herself forgetting that he had the power of life and death, and eat his fish with his fingers. What pleased her most, however, was to see other people forgetting it, and in particular to hear Aunt Sophia speak to her of the monarch of Breda as "that dear old gentleman." What, in short, had first appeared impossible, and then improbable, was becoming an accomplished fact; and though no one outside what might be called the family circle, save the captain, was aware of Edith's engagement, it only remained for her, in mercy as well as justice to her lover—for she was well convinced it was a matter which his intense diffidence and humility would prevent him from pressing upon her—to fix the day on which he might call her his own.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DERELICT.

EXACTLY a fortnight after the little breakfast party at Ladies' Bay had received the news of battle, it was interrupted by another messenger bearing still more important and utterly unlooked-for tidings. Conolly ran past the open window, waving his cap and shouting something which haste and excitement rendered inaudible, and then rushed into the room crying, "A sail! a sail!"

"Do you mean a ship?" exclaimed Aunt Sophia, starting to her feet in agitation.

"Yes, an English ship making for the island. Hark, there speaks the signal from the look-out," and as he spoke the thunder of one of the great guns woke for the first time the echoes of the surrounding hills.

"She was signalled from the hill ten minutes ago," the boy went on, with breathless vehemence, "but we could not believe our eyes. John Newman has just run down to tell us. It is an English ship, he says, an Indiaman, like our dear old *Ganges*, and now we shall all get home again."

"Heaven be praised!" ejaculated Aunt Sophia earnestly.

Edith dropped her head, and her pale lips murmured something inaudible.

"But you must all come out and see the ship," persisted the midshipman, too excited to perceive the effect his tidings had produced upon the girl.

"In a minute or two, my dear boy, we will be with you," replied Aunt Sophia, evasively; and off he ran, grudging to lose any portion of the spectacle of the approaching vessel. To him it was the harbinger of joy; and so, for the moment, it had seemed to the speaker. The thought of returning to her native land had wholly monopolized her mind. Only when she caught sight of Edith's face was she reminded that to her niece's ears, since she had plighted faith with the prince, this news brought no message of freedom—nay, that it would make her future position even less tolerable by its isolation and the loss of all her friends.

"Edith, darling," she cried, vehemently, "there must be a limit to all self-sacrifice. If you feel the abnegation demanded of you too much for your strength, as well you may, leave the matter in my hands. Let me plead for you with dear Tarilam. What has now happened could not have been foreseen, and overrules what has taken place between you. His noble nature will admit it, and will absolve you from a promise made under circumstances which no longer exist. In sending us this ship, when all hope of revisiting England seemed lost to us, the finger of Providence itself has beckoned you home."

Edith listened till the other had finished, with-

out sign or sound. Except that she kept her gaze steadily fixed upon Tarilam, she might have been a marble statue. "Do not tempt me, Sophy darling," she answered in the other's ear in never-to-be-forgotten tones; "you make the path of duty harder for me."

Then, with a bright smile that illumined her white face like moonlight upon snow, she rose to her feet, and advancing with firm step to her lover, who sat with his eyes upon the ground as though submissively awaiting her decision, laid her hand lovingly upon his shoulder. The very pressure of her fingers told him at what decision she had arrived before she spoke.

The prince sprang to his feet, and with a look of ineffable gratitude and content, clasped her in his arms. "Here is my home," she said, returning his embrace, "which I will never quit till death beckons me away. When you are back in England, Sophy dear"—here her voice trembled a little in spite of all her efforts—"you must think of me as a happy woman. Tarilam has given me his all, and I have given him all I have to give. He will not mind if, now and then, perchance, my look is sad with thinking of you, dear, so far away." Here she wholly broke down and hid her face in Tarilam's breast.

"He shall never see it so," exclaimed Aunt Sophia impulsively. "I will never leave you nor forsake you, Edie dear. Even as Ruth clave to Naomi in the old times, so will I cleave to you. 'Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou

lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people;’ so help me Heaven, nought but death shall part thee and me.”

It was difficult to recognize Aunt Sophia as she poured forth those noble words; her homely face was transfigured by the grandeur of her self-sacrifice. Majuba, who had sat silent and troubled throughout this painful scene, which she only half understood, gazed at her with such awed amazement as might have been awakened in some Delphian girl by the inspired sibyl.

“No, no, no!” cried Edith remonstratively, “that must never be.”

“But I say ‘yes,’” answered Aunt Sophia: “whom have I to love but you? How can I spend what little remains to me of life, more usefully, more wisely, nay, more happily, than by my darling’s side. You may count upon my companionship as settled, Edie,” she added with tender earnestness. “And now, Majuba, these two young people had better be left together for a little, while you and I go and see the ship come in.”

It was a spectacle to which she felt that Edith was just now by no means equal, and indeed it was one which she herself had need to summon all the forces of her courage and resolution to face. Without setting too great a store on her own value, she could not but be aware that her promise to share her niece’s exile had robbed it of half its terrors for her; having once made the offer, it could never be cancelled, and she did not repent it; nevertheless the sight that awaited her in Rescue Bay filled her

with many a bitter pang. Every eye was fixed upon the approaching vessel and every tongue was discoursing of it with eager joy. Men by no means given to the melting mood were softened by home thoughts, and shook one another by the hand in wild congratulation. It almost seemed that all that resignation and philosophy they had shown for so many months had been a mere mask to hide their passionate yearnings for their native land; already the husband saw in imagination his wife welcoming him, long lost, but not despaired of, to his home; the father beheld his child; the brother his sister. The captain looked ten years younger than he had done an hour ago; an immense weight of responsibility had been lifted from his shoulders, and his face flushed with pleasure as he reflected that all this great human family which had been committed to his charge—a trust that had not been misused—were about to be restored to their belongings. Master Conolly had a telescope, which he pressed upon Aunt Sophia in broken tones. “I do not want it, I don’t indeed,” he said; and looking at his face it was easy to perceive the reason. He was thinking of the mother who, after all, would see her boy again, and the tears dimmed his sight.

The aspect of the approaching ship was peculiar. She was of large size and had every stitch of sail spread, and as the wind was favourable to her progress towards the island her arrival might have been looked for within an hour at the furthest, but there was something strange, as even Aunt Sophia’s unskilled eyes could perceive, about her steering.

She came on without tacking, yet in a series of zig-zags. Her nationality was plain, for she showed English colours, but otherwise she was an enigma. She took not the slightest notice of the signals made from the look-out, but blindly staggered on like a drunken man. No living creature could be descried upon her deck, and but that she showed no trace of harm from wind or wave, and rose up high in the water, she might have been taken for a wreck abandoned by her crew.

As she drew nearer, indeed, and, without the least regard to the warnings from the land, seemed to be making for the reef on which the *Ganges* had come to grief, Captain Head came to the conclusion that she was without human guidance, and some sailors were despatched in canoes with the object of boarding her and bringing her into harbour, an operation watched from shore with the utmost eagerness and excitement. It was doubtful whether the interest of the Bredan spectators, who had never seen any craft larger than the two boats belonging to the *Ganges*, or that of the English, was the greater. As the huge ship was steered through the channel into the deep but calm waters that fringed the bay, the exclamations of delight from the natives mingled with a burst of English cheers.

From the closest examination it appeared that she had suffered no damage of any kind, nor was there a sign of the existence of any infectious disease such as the captain feared might have caused her abandonment. On the other hand, there was not so much as a ship's biscuit, nor one drop of

water in the way of provision, and his opinion—no doubt a just one, though it was never corroborated—was that the ship, having been driven out of her course like the *Ganges* by rough weather, had been afterwards caught in one of those protracted calms, which, according to the testimony of the natives, alternated with storms in that latitude, and that the crew, with starvation staring them in the face, had taken to their boats with such small store of food as still remained to them, and worn out by toil and privation, had probably perished.

Compassion, however, for the sufferings of those whom we have never seen, or even heard of—and much less when, as in this case, the matter is problematical and uncertain—is necessarily but of a transitory kind, and such considerations were soon forgotten in the general joy. What to others, it was only too probable, had been a catastrophe, seemed to the castaways on the shores of Faybur a signal act of mercy. They had found, ready to their hand, in all respects save one—that of provisions—the means of transporting themselves to their native land. It was no wonder, therefore, that their self-congratulations were excessive; what was much more surprising was that their guests, the Bredans, should exhibit such satisfaction in what had happened; yet such was the amiability of their dispositions that, notwithstanding the obvious loss the departure of allies so powerful would inflict upon them, they expressed the most genuine pleasure at their good fortune.

“How lucky it is,” said the captain to Aunt

Sophia, "that matters have gone no further as regards Tarilam and Miss Edith; though while congratulating you upon what we must needs now consider her fortunate escape, I cannot but pity the poor prince, to whom we are under so many obligations."

Then Aunt Sophia told him how Edith meant to keep her plighted word, and how she herself had resolved to share her niece's exile.

The captain's weather-beaten face grew tender as he listened, and when she had done he held out both his hands to her. "You are two angels," he murmured with much emotion. "I dare not say what I think of you both, or you would call me an idolator. If our places were reversed it would be impossible that I could imitate such self-denial; at the most I can only estimate it at its proper value. We men call ourselves brave; but compared with women such as you we are but as mice to lions. I will not attempt to dissuade either of you from treading a path of duty so high and so precipitous that it well might make you dizzy to contemplate it; but perhaps the mouse may help the lions."

"You have helped us very much, dear Captain Head," said Aunt Sophia, feebly smiling; "when I think of all you have done for us the tears stand in my eyes, as you perceive; but I fear the time has come when it is fated that we must lose your aid."

"I said 'perhaps,'" replied the captain with earnest significance, and unwilling to witness the tears she could not restrain, he turned away abruptly.

Of course, Aunt Sophia knew he could not really help matters; no human aid could now avert the strong current of circumstances that was hurrying away Edith and herself into regions new and strange; but nevertheless there was something in his words, independently of their sympathy, which cheered her.

She returned to Ladies' Bay and gently chided Edith for remaining within doors while such great events were happening; her absence, as she justly argued, could not fail to be remarked upon sooner or later, and being associated with that of Tarilam, must needs betray her secret to everybody. That they must now know it soon was true enough, but it was better, she urged, that it should be told by Edith's lips than gathered from idle gossip.

"You are right, dear," answered Edith, with a little flush; "I shall not be ashamed to tell them."

To any one who saw Tarilam as he looked that day, it would have been difficult indeed to associate him with inferiority in any shape. To his native dignity and faultless grace there was added a look of calm content and happiness as different from the bonfire glow of triumph as is the serenity of a star. He looked every inch a prince, but not less a grateful lover. Majuba and he went down to the shore and met with something like an ovation. The high spirits of the English overflowed in all directions, and their feelings of amity towards the Bredans, heretofore but too much mitigated by prejudice and even jealousy, knew no bounds now that they were

about to bid adieu to them. The appearance of the two ladies was the signal for a burst of cheering; and they were overwhelmed on all sides by congratulations upon their approaching deliverance, every word of which caused them infinite embarrassment and pain.

All this time the king and the captain talked apart, with an earnestness and gravity that forbade interruption. The difficulty of making themselves intelligible to one another no doubt prolonged the interview, but its duration was something portentous. At last the knotty point appeared to be settled, and the king beckoned to his son to join them, when the conversation was again renewed.

The presence of the vessel in harbour attracted the eyes of all the rest, including even those of Edith. Her mind was full of thoughts unutterable, or which she would have perished rather than utter, as she gazed upon the ship that was to bear all her countrymen away from her for ever; but Aunt Sophia, with the remembrance of the captain's "perhaps" in her mind, threw many a glance in his direction and trembled with vague hopes and fears. Was it possible, she wondered, that the captain had persuaded the king to use his influence—which was paramount with his son—to release her niece from her engagement? A cruel thought as regarded poor Tarilam, it may be said, and one unworthy of her; but Aunt Sophia, unselfish and self-sacrificing as she had proved herself to be, had the weaknesses of her sex as well as its virtues; nor could it be said of her, in a matter in which, as she thought, her niece's

happiness was concerned, that though she loved Edith much, she loved honour more.

Presently, as she watched the trio, she saw the captain draw aside from his two companions and make a sign to her to come to him, and, quitting Edith and Majuba without a word, she followed him to a quiet corner of the camp.

"You have news for me, I know, dear captain," she exclaimed excitedly, as he motioned to her to be seated. "Is it possible it may be good news?"

"I rather flatter myself it is," he answered, with a chuckle. "I told you a while ago, you know, that the mouse might help the lion, and I think I may fairly say that after a deal of nibbling he has done it. I have made a hole in the net that held you and Miss Edith big enough for you both to crawl through."

CHAPTER XIX.

DEPARTURE.

THE relief the captain's words afforded to Aunt Sophia was unspeakable. She had so long been accustomed to trust in him, and was so well aware that he never took for granted what he was not perfectly sure of, that she had no doubt of his good tidings. Feeling thus confident of Edith's escape from her troubles, it was not surprising, and, indeed, high time, that her conscience should feel a twinge or two upon Tarilam's account.

"I thank heaven and I thank *you*, dear Captain Head, with all my heart," she exclaimed, "for this unlooked-for mercy; but how does the poor prince bear it?"

"Bear it? How should he bear it? Why, like a man, of course."

Aunt Sophia looked both amazed and alarmed; she began to think that she had been a great deal too sanguine; for if Tarilam had borne such a disappointment 'like a man,' it could certainly not have been what she had taken it for.

"You don't mean to say," she gasped, "that he does not mind our going away to England?"

"On the contrary, he likes the idea. I got the

king to put it to him on patriotic grounds. Told him about Peter the Great lodging in Ratcliff Highway, and fired his ambition."

The terrible thought struck Aunt Sophia that the captain's brain had given way under the pressure of excitement. "I don't *quite* understand what you are talking about," she murmured timidly. "I was saying that I feared the poor prince would not much like being left behind."

"Left behind! Gad, I should think not! Why of course he's going with you. Then Miss Edith and he can have the banns put up in ship-shape fashion and be married by a bishop if she likes. There will be no occasion for Mr. Ainsworth's services, and our people here need not know anything about it. I think it will be better under the present circumstances that they should not. Don't faint, there's a good creature—it's worse than crying. Here's the king."

This was a little ruse of the captain's to bring Aunt Sophia to herself, for in point of fact there was no king, and it succeeded to admiration. The good news she had just received, with its only drawback thus happily removed, had been too much for her. Perhaps she had never quite pictured to herself how great was the self-abnegation she had contemplated in remaining with Edith till the necessity for it was thus done away with. As soon as he saw she was recovered, the captain, with great good judgment, quitted the realms of sentiment and entered into the details of his scheme.

Knowing the king's love for his people, he had

pictured to him the immense advantages that would flow to them from a visit of the prince, with some of his attendants, to England. He could rely upon the well-known generosity and gratitude of "John Company" to send them back to Breda in a ship laden with every article that could be useful to the friendly islanders; and in view of so vast a national boon he had ventured to urge that even separation from his only son would not be too great a sacrifice.

The struggle between patriotism and paternal love in Taril's bosom had been sharp but brief, for his nature was cast not only in regal but heroic mould. He was well aware that if the prince left him as Edith's accepted lover it would be for ever. It was too much to expect that, after once being reunited to her own people, she should return of her own free will to a barbarous and alien land; he knew, too, not only that Tarilam's happiness was bound up in hers, but that he was fitted by nature, as no other of his race had ever been, to reap the benefits and enjoyments of civilization. His feelings were something akin to those of a father, full of Christian faith, who is about to lose a good and virtuous son by death; he felt that he was going to a better land, and one more suited to his gifts. The captain from his scanty store of historic knowledge had produced the example of Peter the Great, as one who had left his country for his country's good, and shown a parallel between his case and that of Tarilam. But the fact was that Taril himself was a counterpart of Peter, without his vices; in

all his royal instincts as great a king, and far less, by nature, of a savage.

His will had always been a law to his offspring, and now that both love and duty demanded Tarilam's obedience, it was hardly to be gainsaid; still, it had not been without many a pang of remorse that the prince had consented to bereave his father of his only son.

Aunt Sophia's gentle nature was touched to the core by the captain's recital. "What was *my* sacrifice, of which you made so much," she exclaimed with enthusiasm, "compared with what King Taril has done!"

"He has helped to restore the average on behalf of my sex in the matter of unselfishness, no doubt," admitted the captain. "I shall now view this ridiculous bone bracelet of his with less dissatisfaction than I should have thought possible. They are noble fellows, both father and son."

"They are, indeed," cried Aunt Sophia. "See, Tarilam has beckoned to his sister; he means to tell her what has happened even before he tells dear Edith, because it is she whom he is about to leave, and not the other. That is a fine trait."

"No doubt," assented the captain. "Moreover, it gives you the opportunity of getting a word with your niece alone. Take her home at once, and break the good news to her. I envy you the sight of the sunshine it will bring into her pretty face."

There was excuse enough in the occurrences of the day for the tender gravity with which Aunt Sophia took her niece's arm, and led her away from

the busy scene. Yet, ere they had reached Ladies' Bay, and before she had spoken a word of what she had to tell, Edith suddenly stopped, and said in a faltering tone—

“I hope, dear Aunt Sophia, no attempt has been made to alter matters between me and Tarilam.”

The confabulation between the king and the captain, and afterwards between the captain and her aunt, had not escaped her notice; she had made up her mind as to her future, and was unwilling that the “low beginnings of content” should be interfered with by any new arrangement.

“Not altered, darling, only improved,” said Aunt Sophia softly; “as soon as we reach home and are quite alone you shall hear all.”

The precaution would have seemed to be unnecessary, for, to the narrator's surprise and disappointment, Edith received her tidings, not only with tranquillity, but with a calmness very like regret.

“Good heavens! you are surely glad, my dear, that we are going back to old England?” exclaimed Aunt Sophia, with amazement.

“Yes, I am glad. I am most sincerely glad. Do not think me ungrateful, Sophy dear, but remember, it will not be ‘old England’ to me.”

In the other's natural joy at their unexpected enfranchisement, she had almost forgotten the reasons, though they had been stated to her and she had admitted their force, which had made exile so tolerable and even welcome to her niece, and

this reply struck her almost as a revelation. If she had known that those words, "I am most sincerely glad," were uttered for her own sake, and not from the heart of the speaker, she would have been even more distressed; for the simple fact was that her tidings were unwelcome.

Edith had, indeed, made up her mind to be an exile under conditions as unpalatable, save for the devotion of her betrothed, as were ever offered to woman; but to return to the country of Charles Layton with Tarilam as her accepted lover was an alternative that seemed more distasteful still. The objections to it were innumerable, and they seemed to her in that short instant to gather themselves together and press against it with superlative force; but it was impossible that Aunt Sophia should be allowed to sacrifice herself a second time for her sake, as it was certain she would do if her niece elected to stay. After this one reminder, therefore—wrung from her in that moment of distressed surprise—of the changed conditions under which she was about to revisit her native land, Edith uttered no word of dissent or discontent. If her behaviour evinced less satisfaction than was expected of her, it was set down by the captain to her credit, as being unwilling to exhibit her joy in a case where her lover, in the persons of his father and his sister, was so great a loser.

King Taril and Majuba, themselves so careful of the feelings of those they loved, naturally took the same view. If there was one other who was not so easily deceived, the modesty of his requirements in

all that concerned the object of his devotion at least made him easily contented.

It was his humble hope that with the greater advantages that would now be open to him, he might in time make himself less unworthy of her.

The feelings of the tenants of Ladies' Bay, including King Taril, now its constant visitor, were indeed in strong contrast to those of the other inhabitants of Faybur; the joy and excitement which possessed the latter, however, prevented them from taking notice of the fact, and the engagement between the two young people—though it was known of course that the prince and his attendants were to visit England—was as much a secret to the whole ship's company, save the captain, as heretofore.

In the mean time the preparations for embarkation went on apace. The vessel which was to carry the castaways home, and which they fitly named the *Deliverance*, had everything on board that they required, except provisions. Just as though they were in London, and were moving into a furnished house, they had only to transfer to it their personal effects. As to stores, in a few weeks she was so laden with supplies from King Taril's bounty, and also with the voluntary offerings of the kindly Bre-dans, that there was some doubt whether she would be able to leave the harbour into which she had entered with such ease. When the day came for their departure there were at least five hundred canoes in the little bay, full of natives come to bid them farewell, and each with some offering by way

of remembrance. In vain were they told that there was no room for more. "Only this from me; only this from me," was the general cry, accompanied by such supplicatory gestures and tearful eyes as almost made the sailors themselves exhibit similar emotion.

The parting between Taril and the prince touched every heart. The king begged him to look upon the captain as another father, and the latter, on his part, assured the king that he would do his best to repay the debt of gratitude he owed him by every kindness to his son.

"I am well aware," were the king's last words, "that in the distant country he is about to visit he will be exposed not only to danger (from which I look to you to guard him), but to diseases that are unknown to us here, and from which he may even die." Here he was silent for a little, restraining his deep emotion with native dignity. "I have prepared my thoughts for this. You will be kind to him, I know, in sickness, but death you cannot arrest. I shall not blame you." Then, turning with a pathetic smile to Edith, he added, "Nor, though you, like Death (and yet so unlike him), are taking my son away, pretty one, do I blame *you*."

Such a farewell between persons apparently so alien and incongruous was probably never seen. Edith and Aunt Sophia were bathed in tears. The captain himself was so moved that he could hardly give the necessary orders for setting sail. As the vessel drew ahead, the natives whose presents had

been declined paddled in front of it and threw on board their yams and cocoa-nuts and flowers, with renewed expressions of affection. "We are happy because you are going home," they cried, "but very unhappy to see you are going away." The king stood on the shore, majestic and erect, waving his hand, and apparently unmoved; but it might be almost said that the whole nation was in tears, and it was with difficulty that the sailors themselves found voice for their three cheers.

CHAPTER XX.

HUMILIATIONS.

THE change in the fortunes of those who manned the *Deliverance* was so great and unlooked-for that it seemed to them like a transformation scene upon the stage, in the reality of which they could scarcely believe. It put them all, save one—Mr. Bates, who still nursed his wrongs and showed in every way he dared his antipathy to the captain—in the highest good humour. They felt like men buried alive who suddenly find themselves restored to fresh air and sunshine; or like school-boys who were going home before their time, in consequence of a providential outbreak of scarlatina. They counted the days that must intervene before, under the most favourable conditions, they could hope to reach their native land, and yet found none of them too long.

To Edith Norbury neither the future nor the present wore so rose-coloured a hue. Yet the change in her position was far greater than in their case, and, considering what she had escaped, might well be considered more advantageous. The revolution in her fortunes had been two-fold. A few weeks ago she had looked forward (though certainly without effusion) to a new life, the drawbacks to which

would have been intensified by backward glances at the old one. She was now returning to her old life, but under such circumstances as made her regard it with disrelish, and even dismay.

It was not only that the prospect of revisiting England awoke a thousand tender and regretful memories which she had believed were laid asleep for ever, and would doubtless have so lain had she remained in exile, but that Tarilam himself lost something of that attraction which, though deep and genuine enough, had, doubtless, owed something to his position and surroundings. He was as gentle, kind, and devoted to her as ever; the gracious simplicity of his nature made him as much the idol of the ship's company as of his own attendants; but he was no longer the enchanted prince who had saved her from the teeth of the shark and the poison of the arrow. The wardrobe of Mr. Marston had been laid under contribution for him, and, in his European clothes, he looked not only as handsome, but almost as much to the manner born, as in his native gear. But for his speech, as the captain said, he might easily have been mistaken for a young English gentleman of birth and breeding who had spent some years in the tropics.

This easy assumption of her own nationality, which was, in fact, the result of natural grace, was somehow disagreeable to Edith; it reminded her of what she would fain have forgotten; if he did not absolutely become in her eyes (what, being so different, he had hitherto never been) the successful rival of her dead lover, he suggested rivalry where,

with all her regard for him, she could not brook it. What was very curious, his unlikeness to the character he had thus involuntarily assumed, distressed her even more than his aptitude for it. The ignorance which he had displayed in Faybur had amused her, and had even been a source of attraction; it had pleased her to be his tutor. There had been something touching in the simplicity of one so highly placed and endowed with such splendid physical gifts. But on board the *Deliverance*, and still more when the ship touched land, and he was first introduced to the scenes of civilization, this ignorance of the prince, which he exhibited without the least reserve, filled her with vexation and even shame.

Their first port, as it happened, was St. Helena, a modest example enough of a civilized community, but what he saw there—indeed, it might almost be said all he saw there—excited in him the rapture of a child. That he had never heard of Napoleon Bonaparte was nothing surprising—some of his English companions had perhaps but little advantage of him in that matter; but the state of astonishment into which he was thrown by the sight of a man on horseback naturally reflected itself in all beholders. He had never before beheld any animal with four legs, and the spectacle of such an abnormal creature in combination with a man aroused in him—only too naturally—the wildest amazement. To discover that this portent—or at least the equine portion of it—declined to eat oranges, filled him with the liveliest disappointment.

His eye was as observant as his mind, and both were bewildered. With all his good sense it was impossible that, placed in so novel a position, he could have the sense of proportion. The present of a string of glass beads threw him into an ecstasy. He felt that he had in his hands the wealth of the Indies, and besought Captain Head to hire a vessel to take them to Breda, the cost of which he offered to repay by three of them, as the knights of old used to give largesse by tearing off a link of their chains. The only drawback to his childish happiness at the spectacle of any novelty was that the king, his father, could not also behold it.

Though he had learnt to write after a fashion, he preferred to keep his memoranda in the Breda fashion, which was by knots upon a string. When anything struck him as extraordinary, he made a knot of it, and as almost everything did so strike him, he not only soon came to an end of his string, but, to his great distress, often forgot what had aroused his curiosity. Upon being taken to see a school, and shown its maps and books, he exclaimed pathetically, "Alas! I am the youngest child here." When asked to exhibit his native accomplishments, he would comply with willingness, and in all those of an athletic nature delighted his audience; but with the same good nature he would comply with a request for a native song, than which nothing more discordant and barbarous ever fell on human ear. It is unnecessary to multiply the occasions on which his extreme simplicity was manifested. Its exhibition, though treated with the utmost delicacy by

those about him, could not but excite the ridicule of strangers, and every smile it evoked was to Edith a bitter humiliation. With woman's art and woman's chivalry she concealed this from the world at large, but from her relative and companion, though she never spoke of it to her, she could not conceal it. Ten times a day did Aunt Sophia wish themselves back in Faybur, and, had it been possible, would, for her niece's sake, have loyally returned thither, though they were within a few weeks' sail of home; for, as she could not but reflect, if Edith felt her lover's deficiencies even now, how much more distressingly obvious must they become in England!

When alone with him, indeed, the affectionate admiration which Edith never ceased to feel for him was as complete and undisturbed as ever. It even pleased her, as of old, when he came to her in his artless way for information about this and that; it was only when his shortcomings were exposed to others that they gave her any sense of pain. But in that case the exhibition of his very virtues would sometimes distress and grate upon her. His filial love and duty often caused him to select objects, intrinsically valueless, but whose novelty took his fancy, to send to his father, including even the furniture of the dinner-table; and by way of apology for a choice that seemed to need it, he would explain in his simple fashion how in Breda the king himself ate off the leaf of the cocoanut, drank out of its shell, and used the husk for napkin.

To the philosophic mind such details would have been of no account, or been even interesting; but Edith, who was no philosopher, shrank from them, nay, she even congratulated herself on the fact that her engagement to the son of this too simple sovereign was as yet unproclaimed, and then flushed with shame at her cowardice.

The captain, as it happened, unconscious of Edith's associations with the place, decided to land at Portsmouth, which was a terrible trial to her. The ship passed within a stone's throw of the very rampart where Charles Layton's interview with her had taken place, and where she had exchanged with him those vows of eternal fidelity. That scene was separated by what might have seemed a lifetime of adventure and strange experience, yet it seemed to her to have taken place but yesterday.

"Your hand is cold, my darling," said Tarilam, who stood beside her, lost in admiration of the ships of war, the batteries on shore, and the fluttering flags in harbour. It was cold, indeed, as Death, and it was with Death her thoughts were busy!

The captain had proposed that the two ladies should be lodged at the hotel till he could communicate with the authorities at the India House as regarded the prince, but they preferred to remain on ship-board. On the fourth day the little party started for London by coach, or, as Tarilam expressed it, in "a house on wheels, which was run away with by horses;" it amazed him that even at

night it should still go on, and that while it went one way the houses, fields, and trees should be going the other.

It was arranged that, until Edith's affairs could be looked into, she and her aunt should take up their abode with the captain and an unmarried sister of his in London, who kept house for him when on shore. It was their wish to live in the strictest retirement, which, in Tarilam's case, was impossible. The report of his arrival made no little public stir, and a house was taken for him and his attendants in the neighbourhood, by the East India Company, who provided for their entertainment on a very handsome scale.

His curiosity for seeing things, as well as the invitations, some of them from persons of the highest rank, which he was compelled to accept, kept him much abroad, and although Edith never failed to welcome him with dutiful affection, his absence was, on the whole, a relief to her. What he had to tell her—and which he told with all the confidence of one who is sure of sympathy in his hearer—was unpalatable, if not absolutely distasteful to her. He was eloquent on matters which to her were not only common events, but things in which she took no interest (there were few things indeed that now *had* interest for her); of the kindness shown him by the great, which, in her eyes, was something worse than condescension; or of his popularity with the crowd, which he took for the national goodwill. She was conscious, though she never confessed it even to

herself, that while her regard for him was as great as ever, her return to England had been the death-blow to that growing affection, which, had she remained in Faybur, might have blossomed into the perfect flower of love. Every familiar scene awakened memories of the man she had loved and lost, and seemed to reproach her for her infidelity to him. The spring of life was broken within her, and all her remaining strength was taxed to its uttermost to conceal the fracture.

Fortunately, her hostess, a kind and old-fashioned woman, penetrated with a sense of the superior social position of her guests, left them very much to themselves, and, with Aunt Sophia, Edith had, at all events, no necessity to act a part. She could be silent without fear of questioning, and, even if she aroused suspicion of how matters stood with her, was at least secure from the expression of it. As to her duty of keeping faith with Tarilam, she never wavered in it for a moment; but sometimes in her heart of hearts she pondered whether she would not have welcomed death itself as a relief from the obligation. She had left but few friends in England, her associates having been limited to the circle around her uncle and cousin, with the members of which she had little in common, and, through a mistake on their part, with which she was at the time unacquainted, but the result of which she accepted gladly, these did not now attempt to renew their acquaintance with her.

While in this state of comparative solitude—with thoughts now dwelling with remorseful regret upon

the past, now recoiling with vague foreboding from the future—a misfortune suddenly fell upon their little household which for the time swallowed up, like an Aaron's rod, her own brood of miseries and apprehensions.

CHAPTER XXI.

BURNING HER BOATS.

CHAPTAIN HEAD was arrested one morning, in his own house, and carried before a magistrate, upon the charge of murdering one Matthew Murdoch, a British subject. The thing was done without a word of warning, but it did not take him altogether by surprise, nor did he need to be told that the person who had sworn the criminal information against him was one Richard Bates. He knew the ex-mate to be of the most vindictive nature, and that he had nursed his hate to keep it warm ever since he had been deprived of his rank; while as to the accusation itself, he felt his conscience clear, and that no jury of his fellow-countrymen would think otherwise. But with the women folk matters were very different. For them the catastrophe was as unexpected and tremendous as a thunderbolt falling from a cloudless sky. They had that intuitive dread and doubt of the law, even in the case of the most innocent person, which appertains to their sex, and with much more justification than belongs to some of its other instincts.

Miss Head in particular, who was, of course, less acquainted with the facts of the matter than her

guests, was almost out of her mind with terror; and the spectacle of her wretchedness afflicted them almost as much as the calamity itself. The captain had done his best to comfort them, assuring them of his ultimate acquittal, but had been obliged to tell them that they would not see him at home again, as murder was not aailable offence, till his trial was over. His parting from them was painful in the extreme, and their joy was proportionately greater when, in a few hours, the good captain returned, though not, as they fondly hoped on seeing him, a free man. The magistrate had come to the conclusion that the charge of murder could not be maintained, and that of manslaughter had been substituted for it. The captain's bail had been fixed at a considerable sum, but so far from there having been any difficulty in finding it, many persons of good position had at once offered themselves as his security. He had never made any secret of the punishment he had been compelled to inflict upon Murdoch, both as a murderer and one whose treachery had endangered the safety of the whole island community, and his conduct had the approbation not only of all upholders of authority but of the public at large. His accuser, Mr. Bates, had had a proportionately ill reception at the police court, so much so, indeed, that he had had to be escorted home.

Poor Miss Head was not only greatly consoled by this intelligence, and by the contemptuous indifference her brother displayed with respect to what was laid to his charge, but found a consider-

able satisfaction in his popularity. If everything, as she was now assured, was sure to go right, she was not altogether unwilling that his merits should be brought into public prominence, even through a prosecution.

To Edith, on the contrary, this reflection was anything but welcome. Though there was no likelihood of her being called as a witness to anything that had taken place at Faybur, it was only too likely that her name would be introduced at the trial, in which case a publicity would be thrust upon her which would be painful to her to the last degree. Upon the whole, she had made up her mind that should this unfortunately come to pass, she would prefer to return with Tarilam to his own country in the ship that the East India Company were fitting out and loading with every kind of useful present, to carry his attendants back to Breda.

Of this, indeed, she had as yet said nothing—though for very different reasons—either to himself or to Aunt Sophia. In the former case, though she knew that such a proposition would be hailed with delight by her lover, it would necessitate her immediate union with him, from which, in spite of gratitude, and duty, and affectionate regard, she shrank with something more than reluctance; in the latter, she knew that such a course would meet with the most vehement opposition; in fact, it was quite possible that Aunt Sophia, in her disinterested devotion, would insist upon sharing her voluntary exile, a step which she could never permit.

The more she thought of the matter the more

this determination grew upon her; it would be held, as she well knew, by those about her, as little less than suicide; if a plan so outrageous seemed preferable to her to becoming Tarilam's wife in England—if, in other words, that prospect was so intolerable to her—they would argue that it behoved her to give him up. Perhaps, indeed, it might be so; but in that case to treat him so would be in the highest degree dishonourable, and she preferred suicide to dishonour.

One thing, however, notwithstanding she had come to this conclusion, she had not yet persuaded herself to do, and it became imperative that she should do it, namely, to destroy the mementoes she still possessed of her drowned lover. Had he been alive, and their engagement been broken off, she would, of course, have returned to him those loving letters, those little priceless gifts, which mark, like mile-stones upon the highway, the flowery path of a girl's love. She had also his portrait, drawn by herself on board the *Ganges* before their arrival at the Cape. They were sacred relics, but they were very far from helping the devotee. To open her desk and look at them was terrible to her, and almost made her falter on the road to which honour pointed; she felt that the very possession of them made it harder and more thorny for her. To burn them would be, as it were, to burn her boats; and, by making retreat (even in thought) impossible, to nerve her for her duty; but to do so seemed nevertheless an act of sacrilege. To keep them was disloyalty to the man to whom she was betrothed; to

destroy them was a wrong to the memory of the only man (as she now knew but too well) whom she had ever really loved.

Whether Tarilam was aware of her possessing these mementoes or not, she did not know. She had certainly never spoken of them to him herself, but in the early days of their acquaintance, when they had been as frank and familiar with him as though he had been a child, it was by no means impossible that Aunt Sophia had done so; his interest in all Edith had done had been from the first excessive, and it was quite likely that in proof of her artistic skill, or in illustration of her past history, he had been shown Charles Layton's portrait. At all events, it was a possession, however precious, perilous to her own peace of mind, and one which might cruelly disturb even that of her patient and unexacting lover.

One morning, when Aunt Sophia chanced to be from home, she took it from her desk, resolving to destroy it—it would have been wiser, perhaps, to have done so without looking at it, but she could not resist one glance of farewell. As a remembrance, alas, it was useless to her, for the memory of the man it portrayed was only too present with her at all times; but to come to the determination of destroying it had cost her many a bitter pang. As she gazed upon it, the occasion on which she had painted it returned to her in its every detail. The cloudless sky, the boundless sea, the quiet corner of the deck in which she had established herself with her painting implements by the side of her lover,

his smiling and expectant face—for the moment she lived only in the past; it was not another day that was passing over her head but the same day; but her eyes, which had then been lit with joy and love, were now dimmed with tears; her ears, that had drunk in his loving laughter, were now dulled to outward things. There was a gentle knock at the door, but she heard it not; a tender tone that murmured "My darling;" and then a hand was lightly placed upon her shoulder. She started up with a cry of alarm, and beheld Tarilam.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MYSTERY.

"FORGIVE me for having startled you, dear Edie," said the prince with his quiet smile. "I am earlier than usual. I have just seen a dear friend of ours, Lewis Conolly. He has been summoned as a witness in the captain's trial."

The midshipman had not been in London since their arrival, having gone down at once to Devonshire, where his mother lived; and, under other circumstances, the news of his presence in town would have awakened Edith's liveliest interest. But at present one thought monopolized her mind.

Had Tarilam recognized the picture for what it was? That he had seen it and her tears was certain, for nothing escaped his eyes; but as she put it back in her desk, with as indifferent an air as she could assume, he had made no observation upon it. In any ordinary case, this would only have been in accordance with his usual delicacy of mind. He never pried into her emotions. If, on the other hand, he had recognized the portrait, his very devotion to her would, she felt sure, have forbidden him to ignore it. He would have said something kind as regarded his dead rival, some-

thing modest of his own pretensions to fill his place.

This conviction gave her a sense of inexpressible relief, and enabled her to converse with him with a calmness which would have otherwise been beyond her powers. The topic of the trial formed naturally the chief subject of his conversation. The captain, he said, whom he had just seen, seemed more troubled in his mind about it than he had hitherto been, and less inclined to discuss it. He was not, however, aware that anything new had come to his knowledge to give him apprehensions as to the result. Conolly had spoken of the matter in the most sanguine terms after an interview with the solicitors for the defence; he had to see them again in the forenoon, after which he would do himself the pleasure of calling on the ladies.

Again and again during the interview did Edith reproach herself for her lack of interest in what on every ground of gratitude and regard should have been of so much importance to her; if the captain had been in greater danger it would, she felt, a just confidence, have placed her own affairs in the background, but as matters stood her mind was preoccupied with them. This did not arise, however, from personal considerations; though her hand lay without response in that of her companion, though she answered him only by monosyllables, it was of him she was thinking, and not of herself, or only of herself as far as her future was concerned with his. In a few weeks, in a month at furthest, if her purpose of returning with him should be carried out,

she would become this man's wife. With that picture she had just put away in her thoughts, instead of his own loving image, would it be right in her so to do? Was it fair to *him*? It was with this scruple that she was occupied.

It was certain that Tarilam was not ignorant of the effect which the revisiting her own country had had upon Edith's feelings, and, doubtless, to this cause he assigned her present emotion. He asked so little of her in return for his complete devotion that almost anything seemed to suffice him. Should she confess all, it would, she was convinced, only make him miserable upon her account, not upon his own. He was content to be second in the matrimonial race, and even a bad second, but absolutely to say him "nay" would be, she felt, to break his heart. Thinking of all these things, she parted from him with more of tenderness than usual, and he from her with a corresponding show of grateful affection.

The quiet household had of late been much disturbed by callers, who came upon business in connection with the coming trial, and that morning they seemed to be more numerous than ever. Once Edith heard the captain's voice raised in a higher tone than was usual with him, after which there was a sudden silence, and once, as she was almost certain, the voice of Lewis Conolly. As he did not come to her, however, this could hardly be, and in her own importunate reflections the circumstance was soon forgotten; she thought it strange that Aunt Sophia's return was so long deferred, but that

too passed away from her mind, and when at last her relative made her appearance there was a look in her face that banished all thoughts of her delay.

"What has happened, Aunt Sophia?" cried Edith, the chord of self vanishing in an instant, at the spectacle of such panic and sorrow in another; "there are tears in your kind eyes. I am sure that you have heard ill news."

"No, no, it is nothing," she answered hastily. "I am a little tired and upset, that's all."

"You have seen an old friend?"

"Who told you so?" faltered Aunt Sophia. The inquiry was one of indifference, but not the tone, which was faint and even awe-struck.

"Well, I guessed it," said Edith cheerfully. "You had always a weakness for Master Conolly, I know. Tarilam told me he was coming to see *me*; and, indeed, an hour ago or so, I thought I heard his voice downstairs; but as you were not with me, I suppose he did not think it worth his while."

"Yes, that was it, no doubt," replied Aunt Sophia. Her assent to so monstrous an explanation—for, as we know, the midshipman was devoted to Edith—was obviously mechanical. She looked the very picture of woe and terror.

"Aunt Sophia, I *must* know what has happened," exclaimed Edith; "whatever it is I can bear it better armed in the armour of my own selfish thoughts than you have done. Tarilam is well, I know; I

see you alive and well; the captain is safe within-doors; and that is all my world, save Conolly. Some misfortune then must have befallen the dear boy. Why did he not come to see me?"

"He was very much cut up and distressed by his interview with the captain, and he did not wish you to be a witness to his weakness."

Edith shook her head. "You are concealing something from me," she said. "If there is sorrow in this house it is fit and right that I should share it." She rose from her seat, and moved towards the door.

"For heaven's sake, Edie, stay where you are!" cried Aunt Sophia, seizing her by the arm. At the same moment the front door closed with a clang; some one had quitted the house. Edith quietly released herself from Aunt Sophia's hold, who, indeed, no longer sought to restrain her, and went out to the top of the stairs. "Captain Head," she called over the banisters, "will you let me have a word with you?"

There had been voices below-stairs when she spoke, but there now fell a sudden pause. Then the captain's cheery tones replied, "By all means, Miss Edith." There was, nevertheless, a hesitation in his heavy step which did not escape her notice. His face had a smile upon it, but also a look of anxiety, as she thought, and even of pain.

"Where is Mr. Conolly?" were her first words.

The smile broadened on the other's honest features. "Why, in this very house," he answered.

"The young dog came on purpose to see you, but he had a fit of shyness. Come up, sir!" he bellowed out as if he were on ship-board; "Miss Edith knows you are here, and wants to see you."

"Of course I want to see him," said Edith. Then the midshipman's light step, but surely slower and with less of spring in it than usual, came up the stairs.

"You naughty boy, why have I need to send for you?" she exclaimed, holding out both her hands.

"I have been with the captain and his lawyers," answered the boy, glancing apprehensively at his chief.

"And I suppose they want you to commit perjury," said Edith, smiling. "If that is so you must not look so pale and frightened when you are in the witness-box. It was very good of you to write to me about your mother. I would have given a thousand pounds to have seen your first meeting. Yet home doesn't seem to suit you, my dear boy. You don't look half so well as you did in Faybur."

"He doesn't like the notion of going into court," explained the captain. "My counsel, Mr. What's-his-name——"

"Baring," interposed Aunt Sophia.

"Just so. Mr. Baring has been impressing so strongly upon him the importance of his evidence that I believe he thinks he is going to be tried instead of me."

"That seems very injudicious," remarked Edith. "Who is this Mr. Baring? I thought you had engaged Mr. Collins."

"That is our leader; Mr. Baring is the junior. Our solicitor has the greatest confidence in him."

There was a long silence. In spite of what had been told her, Edith had an uncomfortable feeling still, derived from the manner of her companions, that there was something amiss. This could now, she felt sure, be connected with the trial alone, from which, perhaps, this Mr. Baring had expressed an opinion that she should not be absent. The testimony of a woman—and of a young one—she had often heard had always a certain weight with a jury.

"I hope, dear Captain Head," she said, "that out of consideration for my feelings you are not throwing a chance away. It would be idle to say that to have to appear in court would not be distressing to me, but what would pain me ten times more would be the reflection that my absence from the witness-box had been a disadvantage to you."

"It is absolutely out of the question," put in Aunt Sophia positively.

"I am speaking for myself, Sophy," continued Edith quietly; "there would, I can easily understand, be no need for both of us to give evidence, but so far as I am concerned my poor services are unreservedly at your disposal."

"No, no, no," cried Aunt Sophia.

"I am speaking to Captain Head," continued Edith decisively. "I am quite sure there is a hitch somewhere, and in some matter in which I am concerned. Unless you assure me, upon your honour, that Mr. Baring has not advised my being subpoenaed, I shall write to your solicitor and demand to be put in the witness-box."

"I thank you, dear Miss Edith, from the bottom of my heart," said the captain, greatly moved; "but upon my honour Mr. Baring never expressed any such opinion."

"But he said *something* about me. Mr. Conolly, you were present, and will tell me the truth. What did he say?"

If ever a midshipman looked embarrassed it was Master Lewis Conolly. He glanced at the captain, he glanced at Aunt Sophia, he glanced at the ceiling. "Well, he talked a great deal about you, Miss Edith, as indeed we all did," at last he stammered.

"But about the trial?"

"He never said one word about you in connection with the trial at all." In a midshipman's theology there is said to be an eleventh commandment. "Tell a lie, tell a good one, and stick to it." Had Edith heard of this dogma she would perhaps have given it a personal application, but fortunately she had not. The lad had a fearless and open countenance, which is also a great advantage in such cases. There is a colour, too, which rises to the

cheek of fibbing youth when his word is doubted that may well be mistaken by any one short of a schoolmaster for virtuous indignation.

"You are a gentleman, and would not deceive a poor girl, I know, who is putting her trust in you," said Edith pathetically.

"Indeed, indeed, I would not," replied the lad with precocious naturalness. Whether he was lying or not, even the intelligent reader, nay, even the author himself, had he been present, could not have told for certain. It is enough to say that Edith Norbury believed him and was satisfied.

It is said, and with more truth than belongs to similar observations, which too often have their source in cynicism and even brutality, that among the few advantages the poor have over the rich is that the necessity for labour prevents them dwelling upon their domestic griefs. The thoughts which are occupied in decking the graves of their dead darlings with flowers in the one case, must be devoted in the other to providing for the living little ones that are still left to them. They have no time to dwell upon their loss. Something akin to this cruel mercy takes place when some bitter sorrow of our own is broken in upon by a calamity, especially if it be short and sharp, that threatens a friend. Until that has been settled one way or another we cease to brood upon our private woe.

Thus, in the approaching trial of Captain Head, Edith Norbury found a partial mitigation of her own distress of mind. She discussed it with Aunt Sophia

in all its bearings, and in her interest and anxiety omitted to notice how much of the talk fell to her share, and how little to that of her companion. What helped her very much was the decision she had finally arrived at to leave England as Tarilam's wife. To do so before the captain's fate had been decided upon, would, she felt, have been impossible; but there were, as usual, delays in fitting out the vessel that was to take his attendants back to their own country; and though the time would be but short to make arrangements for her marriage in the mean time, it would be sufficient. The shorter, indeed, it was, now that she had nerved herself to go through with it, the better. The chief person concerned would hail her resolve with rapture, and the less opportunity Aunt Sophia should have to oppose her plan, the less pain she herself would suffer in carrying it out. She had burnt Charles Layton's picture, lest by any unhappy chance such as had so nearly taken place already, Tarilam should come to the knowledge of her possession of it; his letters and his gifts had shared the same fate. She was a free woman, bound to the past by nothing—save her heartstrings.

It was a terrible exception; yet how many young women, as she sometimes reflected, were even in a worse plight than herself. It was at worst to a dead man, and not to a living one—to a memory and not to some true heart still beating with passionate but fruitless love for her—that she was about to prove faithless. And the wooer she had accepted, though, alas! unloved, was worthy of her love—if

she could but have given it to him. He had won her gratitude, her admiration, her affection; he would prove in all things, she felt sure, that are commonly ascribed to such a relation, the best of husbands to her.

Yet the decision she had finally arrived at, of returning with him to Breda, was only one degree less intolerable to her than its sole alternative to become his wife in England. In vain she called to mind his virtues, his nobility of mind, his generosity of disposition, his tender consideration, his simplicity—which to abuse would be like deceiving a trustful child—and his absolute devotion. It was a noble picture, but on the living wall of memory there hung the likeness of Charles Layton, and she had not the power to remove it, far less to substitute the other's portrait in its place.

Three days had now elapsed since she had last seen Tarilam, and it was significant indeed of the state of her feelings towards him that this circumstance not only awakened in her no anxiety, but was a positive relief to her. Hitherto he had always spent some time with her at least once a day; his absence was therefore the more unaccountable, and what was almost as surprising, Aunt Sophia had not remarked upon it. What was also curious, and would under other circumstances have certainly not escaped Edith's notice, was that, although the captain's trial was now close at hand, her aunt talked very little about it, but made her niece's affairs the chief topic of her conversation.

Mr. Ernest Norbury had, it appeared, embezzled almost all her fortune, but in such a manner as was not beyond the reach of recovery; and active steps, she was told, were being taken to this end. To Edith—bound for Breda—this was a matter, indeed, of almost complete indifference, but it was necessary to feign some interest in it.

“Who is it,” she inquired one morning, “that has taken this sanguine view of my affairs?”

“Mr. Baring; he is a very capable person, and I am told he is doing wonders for you.”

“I should have thought he had had his hands full of a more important matter,” was the quiet reply; “but I am much obliged to him for the interest he is so good as to take in me.”

“He does take a great interest in you, no doubt, from what the captain has told him.”

“It would be ungracious not to acknowledge it. The next time he comes here I shall be glad to see him.”

“Well, he has only been here once,” stammered Aunt Sophia; “the captain’s business is always transacted at his chambers. I scarcely think——”

“My dear Sophy, you need not distress yourself about this paragon,” put in Edith, with a faint smile. “I dare say we shall both survive it even if we never meet.” Then, after a pause, “When does the ship sail for Breda?” she asked abruptly.

“Immediately. No; by the bye, the day has been put off indefinitely, but soon; that is why

Tarilam has not been here of late. He told me to tell you, if you should express surprise at it, that he has been so much engaged in seeing about her lading. The Company are behaving very generously, and he has only to ask for what he wants and thinks will be of service to his people."

"I must know the date for certain," said Edith, earnestly. Her face was deadly pale, her hand was pressing upon her heart, as though to suppress some inward pain. "I must know exactly when the ship sails."

Aunt Sophia herself was almost equally agitated, and, indeed, that her companion had made no answer to her reference to Tarilam might well have shocked her. "I will find it out for you," she faltered.

"Please do, dear, it is important, for I mean to go in that ship."

"You! Great heavens!" exclaimed Aunt Sophia, starting to her feet. "You must be mad to say so."

"No, I am not mad," returned the girl with a quiet distinctness that somehow seemed worse than desperation, "but only very unhappy. Do not make me more so, Sophy, darling, by attempting to alter what is my fixed determination. I am quite resolved to marry Tarilam at once and return with him to Breda. Of course, such a step seems terrible to you; it does to me; but to remain here as his wife would be impossible for me. Yes, that is the truth, which I confess to you, and to you alone, because nothing less will convince you of the necessity of what I am about to do."

"He must never, never know it," gasped Aunt Sophia, replying, as it seemed, to some inward thought rather than to the other's words.

"Know it! Heaven forbid! If you tell him what I say—I mean about my being unhappy and not loving him as he deserves to be loved—I will never forgive you to my dying day. Not to speak of it, never to let him feel how short I fall of what I should be to him, that is the least I owe him."

Her confession, long considered, long delayed, had been made—as such things often are—on the impulse of the moment. Perhaps the news that the ship was sailing soon had extorted it from her, though she knew that it would be delayed to suit her purpose. She had rightly judged that since she had given her reason Aunt Sophia would cease to urge objections. Her fear had been rather that she might have insisted on accompanying her into the exile which she had formerly proposed to share with her. That she had not done this—since it was a sacrifice she would never have accepted—was so far a matter for congratulation to Edith; but otherwise, the effect of her communication upon her companion was even more deplorable than she had apprehended.

"He must never, never know it," repeated Aunt Sophia, rocking herself to and fro and sobbing convulsively. "He must never, never know it." For the time it almost seemed that her passionate grief had deprived this faithful and tender-hearted woman of her senses.

"Don't let us talk of it, don't let us think of it, Sophy, dear," said Edith, soothingly. "Till the time comes, help me to escape from my own miserable and selfish thoughts; I entreat you, as you are kind and true, to do this as the truest kindness to me. The trial is coming off to-morrow. How terrible it must be for poor Miss Head; but as for the captain, I cannot believe that so good a man can come to harm. How long is it likely to last?"

"The trial!" replied Aunt Sophia, wiping her eyes, and staring as though an entirely new subject had been proposed for her consideration. "Mr. Baring puts it at three days at farthest. He is very hopeful about it. Mellor and Rudge are the only witnesses on the other side, and it is said that they are most unwilling ones; their antecedents have been discovered to be very bad. All hangs upon the evidence of Bates."

"The wretch that tried to murder Charles Layton at the Cape!"

"Then you knew of that all along," exclaimed Aunt Sophia: "why did you not tell me?"

"Because I wished to spare your brother's memory. Yes, I knew it; yes. And if I had not known it, I should know it now. I have thought too much of my dear Charley of late to be ignorant of aught concerning him while in life. It is only when I try to think of him as dead and gone that instinct fails me."

"My poor darling!"

Pity could no further go than was expressed in those three words of Aunt Sophia; but there was

terror in her tone as well as pity. While she bewailed her niece's future, it may be that she also doubted her strength to go through with it. Edith's manner, however, was from that moment very calm and quiet; and the forbidden subject was, for the present, no more alluded to.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE REVELATION.

It was the first day of the trial, and all Edith Norbury's thoughts were monopolized by that engrossing subject. All her male friends were of course in court, and she was naturally less surprised at Tarilam's absence—though she had not seen him now for almost a week—than she had been on any of the preceding days. If she had not made up her mind to be his wife so soon, she would no doubt have felt distress and even compunction at his continued omission to visit her. She would have examined herself more particularly as to whether something in her own conduct had not caused his absence, and would not have been so easily satisfied with Aunt Sophia's explanation of it; but as matters were, and seeing he was to be blessed so much sooner than he had hoped with the possession of her, she could not grudge herself the sorrow of her solitude. There were now only a few days left to her for thought to wander free over what would henceforth be forbidden ground; but on this occasion, as has been said, her mind was occupied with less selfish matters.

The whole morning Aunt Sophia and herself

had spent in the company of their hostess, endeavouring to comfort her and keep up her spirits. From hour to hour messengers were despatched from the court-house to the poor lady with tidings of the trial, and, on the whole, considering that the prosecution alone had for the present the ear of the jury, the news was good. The worst that could be made out against the captain was that he had exceeded his powers and committed a technical though indeed a very serious offence; it was not even contended by the other side that he had been actuated by any motives of a personal kind and apart from the consideration of the public good. It was rumoured, however, that Mr. Bates was prepared to swear that his late chief had had a grudge against Murdoch, and, at all events, whatever danger was to be feared lurked in this man's testimony, and in that only. The report of it was therefore awaited by the three ladies with especial anxiety.

After the conclusion of the case for the Crown, however, no news was brought to them for hours, their communications had either by some accident been cut off—which, considering the press about the court-house, and the difficulty of ingress and egress, was not an unlikely thing to have happened—or the news was such as it was thought better not to send.

Aunt Sophia took the more cheerful view, and redoubled her efforts to sustain the courage of her hostess; but Edith, already broken in spirit, and all the chambers of her soul rendered unfit for the entertainment of hope, found herself as a

consoler useless, and withdrew to her own sitting-room.

From that last and worst state of human misery, in which the cloud that overhangs ourselves seems to darken the sky for our fellow-creatures, the selfish and the egotistic are free; the area of their despondency is limited; they do not feel the pressure of that atmosphere of universal woe which weighs so pitilessly upon more tender natures in their hour of sorrow. To Edith it seemed only too likely that the fate which had dealt with her so cruelly might treat with the same harshness the poor captain, and the reflection doubled her own distress of mind.

It was not her habit to vex herself with "the riddle of the painful earth," a conundrum that rarely attracts the young; but on this occasion her thoughts had, with the boldness of despair, strayed beyond their usual limits into that dim and pathless forest of apprehension and surmise which, whether we are aware of it or not, surrounds us all. Once in it, the minutes pass like seconds, and the hours like minutes, though not, alas! on golden wings. Our very existence is absorbed by that future which we thus vaguely contemplate, as the wanderer is lost in the quicksand. It is even doubtful in which of the two worlds, this or that which is to come, we live. What time had elapsed since she had been alone she knew not; but the afternoon had faded into evening when she was aroused by a knock at her door.

"Come in. What news?" she inquired in a breath.

"Good news; at least, I hope so," was the captain's quiet reply, for it was the captain's self who stood before her.

She sprang to her feet with a wild cry of joy, and held out both her hands. "My *dear, dear* Captain Head, how happy I am to see you! All has gone well, then, after all?"

"All has gone well, I hope, dear Miss Edith, after all," he repeated slowly.

"You hope?" she answered anxiously. "Then there is something still behind? Pray, pray tell me all."

"There is something, as you say, still behind," he answered, still in the same cautious and tentative tone, as of one who is afraid of saying too much. "I will tell you all some day, but it is a long story. Just now we have only time for the results, as it were."

She glanced at him in mute astonishment. Why was his speech so bald and bare? Why, too, did he use the plural word "results"? There could be only one result he had to tell her. There was something in his manner, too, notwithstanding the glad tidings he had brought, and which, indeed, were corroborated by his presence, that filled her with vague alarm. The captain's stalwart arm seemed to tremble as he led her back to her seat, and placed himself beside her; his loud straightforward tones had lost their vigour as he commenced to speak.

"This was how it was, Miss Edith. The lawyer that was on the other side had not much to say against me on his own account, though he was a

long time about it; all he did say seemed to glance off the ears of the jury like water from a ship's bows, but he promised them better things in the way of my being shown to be a tyrant and a manslayer when Mr. Richard Bates should come to be examined. That gentleman, he said, had no motive for having laid a criminal information against me, but that of redressing, so far as law could do so, the wrongs of a shipmate, and doing justice to the memory of a dead—he had almost said a murdered—man. It was probable that it would be urged against this worthy person that I had deprived him of his rank, and that out of revenge he had trumped up this accusation against me, but that was, at most, a very small matter even if it could be proved, and would in no way affect the truth of the charge. There was not a tittle of evidence to show that Mr. Bates had been concerned in the alleged mutiny, which would, as he understood, form the poor excuse for my high-handed conduct. He was a just and honourable man, as the jury would presently see for themselves, and incapable of that or any other heinous crime. It might be true that the inquiries into the character of the lives of other witnesses for the prosecution had resulted unfavourably; there were very few of us, perhaps, who had not some secret in our past which we would wish effaced, but this, again, could not affect—or only moderately affect—their testimony upon the matter in hand, while that of Mr. Bates was pure as the driven snow from any stain."

A shiver of disgust passed through Edith's frame.

"Well, well, my dear young lady, we will cut it as short as possible," said the captain, patting her hand; "this learned gentleman, since he was paid for it, was only right to do his best, and his best, no doubt, he did. Though he painted Mr. Bates in such glowing colours, he had to produce the original, you see, after all; and in the frame-work of the witness-box, I do assure you, he did not make a pretty picture. Though I was in the dock myself, I did not envy him, with his hang-dog face, even from the first, and presently a time came when I could almost have found it in my heart to pity him."

"I could not have found it in mine," said Edith, sternly, "for he was at heart a murderer."

The captain stroked his chin, and stared at her with a puzzled look. "That was just what I was coming to myself," he faltered; "is it possible that you know all about it?"

"I know that he tried to murder Charles Layton at the Cape."

"Just so, just so," said the captain softly; and then he sighed, like one who having, as he had hoped, come to the end of a difficult job, finds once more all his work before him. "Well, Miss Edith, they say it would be a good thing if we could see ourselves as others see us, and if so, I ought to be thankful for the account of myself which I heard from Mr. Richard Bates when under the examination of his counsel. It was, I assure you, quite a revelation, and without his unimpeachable evidence, I could never have believed myself to be the irredeemable scoundrel which he showed me to be. By the

time he had got to my shooting of that unhappy wretch, Matthew Murdoch, I began to wonder why I was not on trial for my life, and even why justice had so long permitted me to live."

"I suppose that was the reason—I mean the utterance of this man's slanders," put in Edith, "that no report was brought us of his evidence."

"Well—partly—yes," hesitated the captain; "something also occurred later on, my dear young lady, which it was thought you would not easily understand at second hand, and so they thought it better to wait till I could come home and tell it you myself."

"Indeed! what was that?" said Edith with a preoccupied air. Her tone had become almost indifferent; now that her companion was evidently out of peril, she found it difficult to keep her thoughts from straying from the subject. The captain, on the other hand, was growing more nervous and embarrassed with every word. Though his bluff face was paler than usual, he passed his handkerchief across it again and again, as though he were in the tropics; a gentle execration would now and again hover on his lips, whether in condemnation of his own stupidity, or of those who had set him a task beyond his powers, it was impossible to say.

"You should have seen the change in that fellow Bates," he continued, with an attempt at hilarity in his tone, which was piteous to the last degree, "when Collins got hold of him and shook him, as a terrier shakes a rat. If you have ever seen a man hanged—which, however, I dare say you have not

—and noticed how he becomes in the instant a mere heap of clothes—well, that was Bates's case under cross-examination. I soon found out that there was, at all events, one man in the world a deal worse than I had been shown to be, and riper for the gallows. It was amazing how much more Collins, Q.C., seemed to know of what had been going on in Faybur, and under my very nose as it were—and he a thousand miles away—than I ever knew myself. Bates, he showed, was hand-in-hand with the Malay, the inventor of that secret still, from the fumes of which arose half our misfortunes, and the instigator, if not the actual perpetrator, of the murder of poor Marston, which he tried to lay at the door of the good prince."

Edith's flagging attention was roused in an instant. "Oh, traitor and villain!" she cried; "how well I remember it!"

"You do, do you?" said the captain, earnestly. "You may perhaps recollect, then, one expression that Bates used which puzzled us all, when his accusation failed, about 'cutting a rope'?"

Edith shook her head. "It is no matter," said the captain, but in a disappointed tone, and with the same air of having neared his object, and then having found himself all abroad again, as he had done before. "Well, when Mr. Collins had done with Mr. Bates, the scoundrel revived at once, like one who has received his dozen at the grating, and does not know that there's another boatswain's mate to come. When he saw Mr. Baring rise from his seat, he didn't seem to fear him as he had done

the other (concluding him, I suppose, to be a much younger and probably less skilful lawyer), and he even answered the first question or two he put to him in such an impudent and offhand way as called forth a rebuke from the judge. But when he was asked, 'Did you know one Mr. Charles Layton on board the *Ganges*?' he turned a very queer colour, I promise you. What seemed very strange, however, to me at the time, considering the effect he had evidently produced by the introduction of that gentleman's name, Mr. Baring did not pursue the subject. His design, as I now believe, was to set Bates's thoughts running in a particular channel, in order to make certain revelations he had in store for him more convincing and complete, when the time came. If Mr. Collins had shown himself conversant with matters at Faybur, Mr. Baring manifested even a more minute acquaintance with what took place on our voyage out from first to last. It would have been impossible to believe, Miss Edie, unless one had not known the contrary, that he had not himself been a passenger on board the *Ganges*. One would have thought that he had known your uncle and cousin and even yourself quite familiarly, and had been qualified to speak of all of us from personal knowledge. Among others, he spoke again of Mr. Charles Layton."

Edith uttered not a word, but in the gathering twilight her companion noticed that she straightened herself in her chair like one who collects all her powers of endurance to bear the hearing of some painful and distressing thing. "I will spare you all

I can, Miss Edie," murmured the captain gently, "but it is necessary you should know what took place. As the examination proceeded the witness grew more and more perturbed in manner whenever his gaze met that of Mr. Baring, who presently put this question to him: 'You remember the day on which the storm carried away the deck-house with Mr. and Miss Norbury in it?'

"'Yes,' said Bates, very slowly, and with his eyes fixed on the roof of the court-house, 'I remember it well.'

"'Look at *me*, if you please,' said Mr. Baring sternly. 'Do you remember any other circumstance that happened on that day?'

"'Yes, Mr. Layton was drowned.'

"'How was he drowned?'

"There was no reply. Bates moved his lips a little and that was all. His face was like the face of a dead man. The whole court was so hushed in waiting for his answer that you might have heard a pin drop.

"'Come, sir, you cannot have forgotten a circumstance of which you were a witness, though not, perhaps as you have hitherto imagined, the only witness. Be so good as to tell us what happened at the very time—or within a few seconds after it—that the deck-house of the *Ganges* was carried away.'

"'The *Flying Dutchman* was seen by the two men at the wheel.'

"'I am not asking you what was seen by the men at the wheel. Let us hear, if you please, how Mr. Layton was drowned.'

"Then Bates licked his dry lips, and answered straightforwardly enough, but in a dull, mechanical way, 'When the deck-house was carried away with Mr. Norbury and his niece in it, Mr. Layton caught up a life-buoy and threw himself into the sea, with the object of saving the young lady.'

"'Well?'

"It was only a monosyllable, Miss Edie, but if it had been an indictment as long as my arm, it could not have been more effectual. Bates seemed by his looks to have changed places with me, and to be no longer the witness but the criminal.

"'I know nothing more,' he faltered.

"'What? Did you never see Mr. Layton's face again after he leapt from the deck?'

"'Never.'

"The man was speaking so low that notwithstanding the silence, the judge could not hear it, and it had to be repeated.

"'Think again,' said Mr. Baring. 'Was not the drowning man carried back to the ship's side while you were leaning over the bulwarks, and was there not a rope hanging from it at which he clutched?'

"The wretched creature was trembling, Miss Edie, in all his limbs, and whether he shook his head in dissent or not no man could say; but he did shake it.

"'Look at me, Richard Bates,' cried Mr. Baring, in a terrible voice. 'Now will you dare to swear that you did not cut that rope?'

"He had taken off his wig, Miss Edie, and shown him the man he believed he had murdered!"

Edith threw up her arms with a wild cry of joy. "Not dead! not dead!" she exclaimed; then her head sank upon her breast, and she murmured in despairing tones, "Too late, too late!"

"Hush, hush, Miss Edie, you must not say that," said the captain soothingly, "it is always better late than never. If some one else had broken it to you instead of an old blunderhead like me, you would not be taking on so. It was cruel to me and cruel to you that they should have made me do it. But I do assure you things are not so bad as you think."

She held out her hand with a bitter smile, and the captain pressed it to his lips.

"There, there, now I know you have forgiven me, Miss Edie. I have plenty more to tell, but I don't know how to tell it, and that's the fact. As for what happened afterwards at the trial—though I know you are glad to see me a free man—you can afford to wait for all that. There is nothing so interesting to us, after all, as our own affairs, eh, Miss Edie?" this with a miserable attempt at slyness. "Your aunt is waiting below stairs to discuss them with you, unless you would like to see any one else first," he added, hesitatingly.

"Tarilam, Tarilam; I will see nobody but Tarilam," was Edith's impassioned reply.

"Oh dear, oh dear; what is to be done *now?*?" ejaculated the captain, glancing helplessly about him. Then, with a sudden look of relief, he stamped loudly upon the floor.

It was evidently a preconcerted signal, for Aunt

Sophia at once presented herself at the door. "Have you told her all?" were her first words.

"I don't know what I've told her," replied the captain despairingly; "I only know I have made a mess of it, as I knew I should. She has heard that Mr. Baring is Charles Layton, and when I asked her if she would like to see him, she answers, 'Tarilam, Tarilam; I will see nobody but Tarilam.'"

"My pretty, *pretty* dear," exclaimed Aunt Sophia, throwing herself on her knees beside her niece, and embracing her tenderly, "Prince Tarilam has sailed to-day for Breda."

CHAPTER XXIV.

BREAKING IT.

THERE is a great art in "breaking things" of an emotional character to the persons principally concerned. The American (Jonathan) who volunteered to convey the tidings of his friend (David's) death to his wife, thought, no doubt, he had hit upon a subtle and delicate way of doing it when he knocked at her door and inquired whether "Widow David" lived there. But, as a rule, people shrink from this sort of task, and prefer to get it done by proxy. It was not, however, because Aunt Sophia wished to spare herself that she had deputed the captain to reveal to Edith the fact of Charles Layton's being still in the flesh. She hoped that from his lips it would come, not indeed with a less shock of surprise, but with a less disturbing influence than from herself, whose very presence cognizant as Edith knew her to be with her inmost feelings, must needs "make weakness weak," and unfit her for the reception of such amazing news. She had been in possession of it herself for many days, and judging from the weight of it even upon her own mind, she had almost feared lest that of Edith should break down under the burden so suddenly laid upon it.

It was not till after much discussion and consultation, and with the greatest pressure upon the gallant sailor himself, who shrank from it with a cowardice that did him infinite credit, that it had been decided, in case of his acquittal, to intrust this revelation to the captain's hands. It was hoped that the good news of his own discharge from danger would give his hearer strength to bear the tidings of what concerned herself; and, moreover, that it would be thus conveyed to her in the most natural and straightforward manner.

Unhappily, however, a man may have a story at first hand, and even of his own experience, and yet be a bad hand at telling it. If the captain had not—as he had remorsefully confessed—absolutely “made a mess of it,” he had certainly not succeeded as a *raconteur*. Indeed, he had made the appalling mistake of beginning at the wrong end of his story, and now poor Aunt Sophia had to tell it all over again—under what must be allowed to be a great disadvantage—to an audience on the brink of hysterics. Even when the poor girl had recovered herself a little, it was doubtful whether she quite understood her position, since she kept murmuring “Tarilam, Tarilam,” in a voice so despairing and pathetic as would have touched her companion in any case, but which, as matters were, gave her the keenest pain. At last, however, the symptoms of the malady, as it were, themselves suggested the remedy, and Aunt Sophia began to speak to her, not of the lover she had found, but of him she had lost, and who, heretofore, had been so injudiciously ignored.

"Do you remember, Edie, darling," she said, taking the girl's hand in both her own, and speaking with infinite tenderness, "the morning on which he found you in this very room, looking at Charles Layton's picture?"

The reply was so feeble and choked with tears that only the ear of love could have caught it.

"You are right, my darling; he did not know whose it was at the time," continued Aunt Sophia; "but no sooner had he left you than he met the very man face to face, in this very house, and recognized him for whom he was only too well—that is why Tarilam has never seen you since, dear Edie."

There was a long silence, which Aunt Sophia forbore to break, in hopes that from that last sentence the girl would be able to guess for herself the situation, and thereby render the details that must follow less distressing.

"I do not understand," said Edie, passing her hand helplessly across her forehead. "How came Mr. Layton in this house?"

"Well, it was this way. When he leapt into the sea it was as he thought to save you, and not your unhappy cousin; he believed you to have been drowned before his very eyes. How, after that wicked wretch had cut the rope by which he could have regained the *Ganges*, he was picked up by the ship which our sailors took for the *Flying Dutchman*, I will tell you another day; but after he returned to England he was as fully convinced of your own death as you were of his. Though he had

saved his life, it seemed—as it seemed to you—that he had nothing left to live for.”

Edith uttered a piteous moan, which went to the other's heart, for she understood its meaning.

“Do not reproach yourself, my darling,” she continued, soothingly, “for, as well we all know, you did not forget him any more than he forgot you. You are both, as we all are, compelled by circumstances to do what seems the best—where all is bad—for ourselves. Law became his mistress, and he applied himself devotedly to his profession, though, as it happened, there was no longer need for him to work. You remember that he used to speak to you of certain expectations which might possibly bear fruit. They did so, and soon after his return to England he became a rich man, upon condition of his taking the name of Baring. The fact of his existence thus became by that simple means, as unknown to you as that of yours to him. Though he knew, of course, of the rest of us having arrived from Faybur, he made no attempt to communicate with us. It was not flattering to poor me, Edie, was it? but the consciousness that you were lost to him made every association with you distressing to him.

“Directly he heard, however, of the danger in which the captain stood by the action of Mr. Bates, he volunteered his services. Though he knew that that scoundrel had returned home, he had hitherto not thought it worth his while to punish him; his attempt to murder him by cutting the rope would have been a difficult thing to prove under ordinary

circumstances; but the fact, as he instantly perceived, might be made of infinite service to the captain, as indeed it proved, for on the confession of so foul a crime, wrung from the chief witness against him, the case broke down at once."

Here Aunt Sophia paused; it seemed to her as though she spoke in vain; for Edith evinced no sign of interest, scarcely of attention. Her eyes were fixed straight before her, with an expression of extreme bewilderment and pain, and the hand her companion clasped and fondled in her own was cold as ice and dead to the touch of sympathy.

"You said he was in the house—this very house—that day," she murmured presently.

"Yes, he called, as I have said, to offer his services in the coming trial, of which he had just heard. His card, of course, told the captain nothing, and 'Heaven forbid you should be the man I take you for,' were the words with which he was greeted.

"'You are sorry, it seems, to see me in the land of the living,' answered Mr. Layton, bitterly. 'Well, I am sorry to be there myself.'

"Then he went on to say that he should never have sought to renew his acquaintance with the captain, on account of the melancholy associations with his lost darling it must needs awaken, but for the peril in which the other stood, and which it was in his power, as he thought, to free him from.

"Not one word of this, Edie, as he assures me,

did the poor captain at the moment understand; he had been amazed beyond measure at finding Mr. Layton still alive; the thought of the relations that had once existed between you and him, and which had been so unfortunately severed by your engagement with Prince Tarilam, shocked him exceedingly; but now it seemed even a more terrible complication had arisen. It was plain that Mr. Layton in his turn did not know of your existence, and it instantly struck the captain that it would be better he should never learn it, since to hear you were alive and out of his reach would be to suffer a second bereavement. If you had told the captain, as the other day you told me, that you intended to sail with Tarilam as your husband, he would certainly not have opened his lips to Mr. Layton; that he did not know this, and therefore felt that concealment was useless, is something, at least, to be thankful for, my darling."

Edith shook her head, and a piteous shiver ran through her slender frame.

"I feel as though I could be thankful for nothing but death," she answered with despairing calm. "I am the cause of trouble and wretchedness to all who belong to me, and most of all to those whom I love best."

"At all events, nobody grudges the trouble you have cost them," said Aunt Sophia soothingly. She felt how utterly inadequate were such words for the occasion; the rôle she had to play was far beyond her powers, yet, somehow, she must needs go through with it. "The captain, as I have said, my

darling, felt that sooner or later Mr. Layton must become cognizant of what had happened, and that being so, the sooner he should learn it the better; and yet, as he confessed to me, he shrank from telling him as he had never shrunk from peril on sea or shore. It seemed to him that no situation could be more distressing or beset with difficulties, till all of a sudden, while he was cudgelling his brains for a way out of it, the matter was made worse a thousandfold—the door opened and Tarilam himself stood before them.”

With a sharp cry of anguish, Edith put her hands up to her ears, as if to close her senses to what was coming.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SACRIFICE.

"Do not shut your ears, Edie, darling," continued Aunt Sophia earnestly, "to the noblest story that ever woman had to tell of man.

"'This is Prince Tarilam,' said the captain, hardly knowing what he said. 'And this,' said the prince, interrupting him before he could complete his introduction, 'is Mr. Charles Layton, whom Edie believes to be dead and drowned.'

"He had recognized the likeness to the portrait he had just seen in your hand, and understood at once not only what had happened, but what must needs happen if he should take the course which the generosity of his noble nature had instantly suggested to him. His voice was calm and even gentle, the captain tells me, and in his generous face could be already read the self-sacrifice he had in contemplation."

"Let me go to him! let me tell him what I owe him!" cried Edith, starting to her feet. "Oh, Tarilam, Tarilam, why can I not be as noble as yourself?"

"Because, my darling, you are a woman," an-

swered Aunt Sophia boldly, "and what was difficult for him is impossible for you. Not, however, by a hair's breadth would I belittle his greatness. You, who know how he loved you, can alone appreciate what it cost him to give you up. This, he did, however, in a few simple words that deserve to be written in gold. Since you would never have promised to be his own, he said, had you not believed his rival to be dead, he acknowledged that you belonged by right to him who had first won your love. The simplicity of his reasons for right-doing touched his hearers almost as much as his self-sacrifice itself.

"'One has heard of nature's noblemen,' exclaimed Mr. Layton, 'but here is a born prince indeed;' and, independently of the huge obligation under which he is to him, it is impossible to exaggerate his admiration for Tarilam's character. Though, from obvious motives of delicacy, he has forborne to thrust his companionship upon him, he holds him as his dearest friend."

"Tarilam, Tarilam, tell me of Tarilam," murmured Edith impatiently; to speak or think of others just then, and especially of his rival, seemed to the poor girl, bowed down beneath that weight of debt, ungrateful and disloyal to her generous creditor.

"Tarilam, my darling, as was only to be expected of him," answered Aunt Sophia, "had no thought except for you, and how to cause you, where so much must needs be painful, the least

possible distress of mind. It was arranged that under pretence of being occupied with the arrangements for the departure of his people, he should cease to visit you as usual. He had resolved to sail with them directly the trial was over, and he had seen that dear friend safe for whom, in all his own trouble, he had shown the tenderest solicitude. One stipulation only he made—that he should bid you one last good-bye before he went, and with his own lips wish you that happiness which——”

Here Aunt Sophia for the first time broke down; nothing, indeed, but the extreme importance of not giving way to emotion, for Edith's sake, had hitherto restrained her from doing so; for while she had been speaking of Tarilam, the picture of his calm, despairing face, so ill-assorting with his generous and self-denying words, had never been absent from her mind. She was moved, in truth, no less than Edith herself; who, though she now knew what Tarilam had done—and, better than any, its greatness and nobility—had not been a witness for days and days, as Aunt Sophia had been, to the doing of it. Tears Tarilam had not shed—for he had done nothing misbecoming—and tears did not become his father's son and a prince of Breda; but the distress of that brave though well-nigh broken heart, had been terrible to witness, and the thought of it all, for the moment, fairly overcame her.

Presently she felt herself roughly shaken by the arm, while at the same time a voice she scarcely recognized as that of her companion—it was so

fierce and harsh—rang in her trembling ear. “And who forbade my Tarilam to come?” it inquired menacingly; “who dared to deny me to him? Oh, cruel and ungrateful wretch that he must think me! The one poor favour that he asked of one who owed him all to be refused! Who was it, woman?”

“Edie darling, forgive me, it was I.”

“You!”

Monosyllable though it was, the word seemed the very concentration of contempt and even hate, and the girl shrank from her as she uttered it.

“Listen, Edie, and when I have told you why I did it,” said Aunt Sophia piteously, “think of me what you will. When he first proposed to say his last good-bye to you in person, I offered no opposition to it; it would, I knew, be distressing to you, of course, to the last degree, but since he seemed to think it would be some comfort to him, I felt it only due to him that he should have his way. It was then arranged, as he had understood, that you were to marry him within a few weeks or months; but when you presently confided to me that you proposed to be his wife at once and sail with him to Breda, a terror seized me lest you should tell him so before he could explain how matters really stood. It would have been too much for mortal man to bear, Edie, if his disappointment had taken that shape; to have such a cup of happiness held to him so close, and then to have had to dash it from his lips with his own hands, was an ordeal too

terrible to subject him to. Do you remember how, when you told me of your intention, I said, 'He must never, never know it'? though fortunately you misunderstood my meaning. All I thought of then, all I have thought of since, was to spare that noble heart one needless pang. I persuaded him that to see you again would distress you infinitely more than to learn what had happened from other lips, or from his own written words, and that argument, as I had foreseen, sufficed. He could not bring himself to write just now to his dear writing mistress.—There, there, I will say no more."

Aunt Sophia had said enough, and more than enough, though how to have told her story in fewer or more judicious words would have puzzled a wiser brain than hers. Those simple words, "his dear writing mistress," had "melted the waxen heart" of her companion, and she had fallen on the floor like one struck by death itself. The tension to which her mind had so long been subjected, followed by the shock of the captain's tidings, had tried her strength to the uttermost, and now it had given way.

"I have killed my darling" was Aunt Sophia's first agonized thought, and when, after life returned, the patient lay for weeks in fever and delirium, her remorse was hardly less poignant. Her cry was only exchanged for one almost as bitter, "I have driven my darling mad." That Edith, however, remained for so long a period utterly ignorant of the events that had been so perilously crowded into her last day of conscious life was probably on the whole

to her advantage, for before she came to herself her constitution had had time to gather strength.

The first question she put to Aunt Sophia in her natural voice, "Where is he, Sophy, dear?" was one that puzzled that good lady not a little to reply to; for she was by no means certain as to which of her two swains Edith was making inquiry. Upon consideration, indeed, she felt it must needs be Mr. Charles Layton, and I am afraid she rather grudged that fortunate gentleman his first place in her niece's mind.

It was very unreasonable, of course, but the fact was that Aunt Sophia had become, though unconsciously, a partisan on the losing side. The spoils were to the victor, and he could well afford to be without her sympathy, the absence of which, moreover, he never discovered, and though somebody else did so, she was far indeed from resenting it. If anything could have made Aunt Sophia dearer to her niece's heart than she was, it was the consciousness that she respected and admired Prince Tarilam more than any living man. They did not talk of him together very often, but when they did so it was with hushed voices and dewy eyes.

Charley always spoke of him to his wife as the noblest fellow he had ever met, but somehow his praise was not acceptable to her; it was well meant, indeed, but, like the worship that had been offered to her as the Queen of Flowers, it was, she felt, but the incense of ignorance. None but herself—and one other—knew what a noble heart beat in Prince

Tarilam's breast, and, thanks to that other, still continued to beat. Of this, however, Edith knew nothing till years afterwards, when the child that had nestled in her bosom was dancing on her knee.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AUNT SOPHIA'S SECRET.

EDITH had received that day a letter from Breda, the first of many a one that reached her whenever opportunity served, and the two women had been talking of the writer with infinite tenderness.

"To hear that dear Tarilam is well and happy," said Edith, looking at her boy, "makes my cup of happiness full to the brim. Hitherto, as I may now confess to you, Sophy, darling, there has always been a drop of bitterness in it."

"You need not blame yourself on that account," answered Sophia, with a sudden touch of tartness. "If you had forgotten his misery, you would have deserved to share it."

"That is quite true, dear Sophy," was the humble reply. Then, after a little pause, "Was he so very, very miserable?" she rejoined softly. "I have never dared to ask you about what happened on that dreadful day, when you took leave of him, but now that he seems so happy and resigned——"

"Or says so for your sake," put in Aunt Sophia significantly.

"Indeed, dear Sophy, I hope that it is not so; why should you think it? Have you any reason unknown to me?"

"Reason! no, I have no reason," answered the other, dryly, "but only a woman's instinct, and pity for a generous nature hardly used."

"Oh, Sophy, and have *I* no pity?"

"I should be ashamed, indeed, to think so, Edie; but you have your husband and your child; and sometimes in your paradise of happiness it seems to me that you have forgotten him to whom you owe it."

"Indeed, indeed, I have not forgotten him; Heaven knows it, for night and day his name is in my prayers."

"Then I have done you wrong; forgive me."

The two women kissed and wept, while the child gazed at them and pulled his mother's sleeve, amazed.

"At one time I had wished to keep what I had to tell a secret to myself for ever, Edie, and then I thought I would wait and tell you when time had given you strength to bear it; and then, again, when I saw you, as I wrongfully supposed, forgetting him a little, I hid the matter, because I felt you were unworthy to hear it, and if you had not asked me, Edie, you would never have known one word of it to my dying day."

"When Tarilam had given you up to his rival, it was fortunate, indeed, I thought, that he had so

much to busy himself about in the preparation of his people for their voyage and in the lading of the ship. I saw him every day, and though he spoke of you at times in words that pierced my heart with their devotion and despair, he mainly dwelt upon the subject of the voyage, and of the pleasure which this and that and the many gifts he was taking back would give the king, his father. You remember his room, Edie, how crowded it was with those little mementoes of his own choosing, simple and often worthless in themselves, but speaking so eloquently of his filial love?"

There was no reply, but by the tears that coursed down Edith's cheeks it was easy to see that she remembered them well.

"At last the ship was ready for sailing at an hour's notice, and only awaited the prince's pleasure, while he, on his part, was delaying his departure for the result of the trial. It was arranged that directly this should be known I should communicate the news to him, and bid him a last farewell. The messenger arrived from the courthouse only a little in advance of the captain himself, who always says that the heaviest burthen ever laid upon a man's shoulders was the telling of the tale he had to tell to you. While he was doing it, however, I was employed upon a task that was even more painful, for the captain's story had a bright side for your eyes, Edie, and my good-bye to Tarilam had none for his. He listened to all I had to say of you with greedy ears, but in silence, and the

distress in his gentle face was piteous to witness. The only thing that seemed to give him comfort was the conviction I expressed that in due time, and after you had recovered from the shock of his departure, you would be happy. He seemed to feel the same content as regarded you which a dying parent feels in the happiness of his children."

"Did he speak of Charley?" whispered Edith, in trembling tones.

"Yes; in the most kind and generous terms, acknowledging his superiority to himself and the likelihood of his making you a better husband. Not a touch of jealousy 'stained the white radiance' of that noble soul."

Edith was choked with sobs. Aunt Sophia took up the child and placed it on the mother's lap ere she resumed.

"He had declined to write to you ere he went away, as I have said; but I now besought him to take the first opportunity of doing so on arriving at Breda. I told him how dear his memory would always be to you, and what pleasure it would give you to hear from him. To this he answered nothing. 'You *will* write to her, will you not, dear Tarilam,' I adjured him solemnly, 'as soon as you get home?'

"Then, when he still made no reply, I read something in his face, which, though it must have been there all along, I had not seen before. I should not have seen it then, perhaps, but for the recollection that suddenly occurred to me of some-

thing he had said to me in Faybur. He had told me that it was the custom of his royal race, when they found life too great a burthen, to put an end to their own existence by the woorali poison, a few grains of which they always carried about with them. I had thought little of it at the time—for, strange as it was, there was so much else that was strange in those days—and still less afterwards, when Tarilam had, as it were, become one of ourselves, and seemed to be separated from all the ways of his kinsfolk. But now that he would not give me his promise to write—for, as you know, he could never be induced to tell a lie—it struck me, in a flash, what he meant to do. ‘Tarilam,’ I said, ‘I have given you hope, and good hope, that sooner or later our Edie may recover from the sorrow which your sudden and unlooked-for departure must needs cause her; but, believe me, she is in no condition to bear any further shock. If you think of killing yourself, remember you will kill her also.’

“He did not answer, but turned his face away from me with a piteous groan. I had guessed his purpose, and saw that it was already frustrated. He had flattered himself that he had found a way of escape out of his misery, and now it was closed to him, as I knew, for *ever*. ‘It would have been easy to die for her, dear Tarilam,’ I said, ‘but you must do more—you must live for her,’ and it is for your sake, Edie, that he is living now.”

For the rest, a more loving husband than Charles

Layton no woman ever found, nor was it to be wondered at, since he had been always devoted to her. "Faithful and true, living or dead," had been the promise he had made to her from the first, and he kept it loyally. She was loving and devoted, too, but with a difference; the sense that she had not been so loyal as he oppressed her. Her offence (for such she always considered it) in this respect had unhappily been twofold, or rather had been a twofold catastrophe. She had forgotten the dead and misled the living. They had both forgiven her and both assured her, indeed, that there was nothing to forgive, but she could not forgive herself. The subject was never alluded to, but years elapsed before remorse faded to regret. She had troubles, as have the happiest of us—one that especially wrings a mother's heart, but even that did not surpass the pang of pity and self-reproach that shot through it whenever she thought of Tarilam. Society was distasteful to her, partly, perhaps, because she feared lest its babble—whether thoughtless or malicious—might concern itself with this tender topic, and partly because long residence in her island home had begotten a taste for solitude. Her husband toiled and thrived, and was raised, while still in middle life, to the bench. Her greatest happiness was in his success, and, above all, in the honour in which he was held by all men; but her own life was a retired one. What had happened to her at Faybur was not only an epoch in her life, but an experience that coloured all the current of it. Many a woman, before she meets the man of

her choice, has a sweetheart whose memory keeps its tender and not unwholesome fragrance for years, but the recollection of Tarilam abode, in all honesty and honour, in Edith's heart for ever. She never forgot her Prince of the Blood.

EPILOGUE.

THE FAIRY GODMOTHER.

It was by the last post, on the previous evening, that Arthur Forester had received at his chambers in the Temple the MS. which Cicely had sent him, and when he rose from its perusal the summer sun was high in the heavens. The narrative was certainly not without an interest of its own, and the more so since it was the life history of one still living, and whom he had so lately seen; but it could hardly, I fear, have riveted his eyes to its pages for so many hours had it not had for him a personal interest of the most vital kind. It was, indeed, as he had been assured, no allegory, but a lesson that he who ran might read; its obvious moral was, under every chance and change, to be faithful to those we love; and it addressed itself, as Cicely had told him, at least as much to her as to him. She might have said even more so, for in her godmother's story, which, without doubt, was that of Edith Norbury, it was Edith who had failed in her fidelity, and not her lover. It was true that her own case was not Cicely's, inasmuch as she

had refused to be engaged to him; but, if he had had any doubt of it before, he was now well convinced that she loved him, and was willing to wait for him, if only he should prove himself worthy of her; her sending him the story could have had no other purpose than to assure him of it.

The words that she had written on its envelope were even still more convincing—"I sympathize with her regrets," which meant, of course, with Edith's regrets; for if the tale had been named after its heroine instead of its hero, might it not well have been called "The Remorse of Edith Norbury"?

And who *was* this Edith Norbury, whom he had only seen but once, and never before—though it seemed she was Cicely's godmother—so much as heard of? There was a Layton, he dimly remembered to have heard, who had risen at an unusually early age to the bench, and had died when still young—for a judge. That must have been thirty years ago and more; but it was quite possible that the beautiful old lady he had seen in the wheeled chair, and whom he had likened to a princess, was his widow. And it seemed that she might have been a princess had she so chosen. No wonder that Cicely had said to him that evening, "Among all the thousands that are in these gardens, there is no one whose story has been such a romance as hers," but how strange it was that he had never heard of it!

Upon consideration, however, was it, he asked

himself, so strange? It was a story that its heroine had very good reasons for concealing; and its incidents were more than half a century old. However notorious it might once have been, there was time enough and to spare for it to have been forgotten. Scores of people with whose name the world is busy in their youth survive to find themselves obscure, and the more quickly if, as was doubtless this lady's case, they seek obscurity.

Interesting as Lady Layton had become to him since he had learnt her story, Mr. Arthur Forester had, however, matters of greater interest to think of, albeit they arose from its perusal. He sat down and wrote two letters, one to the secretary of a great personage who had offered him the appointment in India, and one to Cicely. The tone of this latter note was affectionate and devoted, but free from passion. "I have read the story of your dear godmother," it said, "with the utmost interest, and have laid its lesson to heart. I should have liked before I sail to thank her for it in person, but I can easily understand that that is impossible. My time is short—three weeks from this date. You will give me, dear Cicely, one interview, I know, before I go. I promise you it shall cost you nothing, for I will ask for nothing." It was a very humble letter as regarded Cicely, and a very modest one as regarded himself. "With such a prize in view as I have," he said, "it is a small thing to say that I shall do my best to win it. If I fail to do so, it will be my own fault, but not (as I would have selfishly made it) another's misfortune."

In reply to his letter, Cicely appointed a day for their interview. It was not at an early date, but the reason for that, as they were to meet but once before his departure for India, was easily explicable. To feel that he was still on English ground for any time after she had bidden him her last good-bye would naturally be distressing to her. In the interval Arthur Forester occupied himself in making arrangements for his departure.

At the appointed day he repaired to his uncle's house—who was a widower—where he was evidently expected. Instead of being shown up into the drawing-room, he was ushered to the boudoir, which he rightly judged to be of good omen. Impecunious cousins and detrimentals generally have not the *entrée* of that sacred apartment.

Presently Cicely entered, accompanied by an old lady, very gentle and gracious-looking, who leaned upon the girl's arm. Arthur recognized her at once, and before saluting his mistress, respectfully raised her companion's fingers to his lips. "You know who I am, it seems, young sir," she observed good-naturedly.

Now, instead of saying "Yes, you are Cicely's godmother," Arthur had the intelligence to reply, "You are Lady Layton, madam," and she inclined her head with a smile of pleasure. Even the most unselfish of one's fellow-creatures like to be valued for their own sakes. Moreover, the young man's words were accompanied by a look of unmistakable tenderness and sympathy. It touched him to think that, woefully changed indeed by time and trials,

but still a living being like himself, there stood before him Edith Norbury, who fifty years ago had been, perhaps, the counterpart of Cicely herself. Her story, with all its *dramatis personæ*, came involuntarily into his mind. Were they all dead and gone, he wondered, and she alone left to tell of them?

Her ladyship looked at him very fixedly. "Forgive," she said, "the egotism of a recluse. What is it, young sir, that you are thinking about me?"

Arthur blushed to his forehead. If he could have invented some less personal reply on the spur of the moment, it is probable he would have done so; but, as it was, he told her the simple truth.

"It is a good sign for you, darling," she said, turning to Cicely, "that this young man pities the old. Yes, sir," she added in low tremulous tones, "they are all dead, save one—the good Prince, and my dear husband, and kind Aunt Sophy, and honest Captain Head. They are all gone to heaven, where I hope soon to follow them. But do not let me shadow with my cares, my child, your parting hour."

Here the old lady whispered to Cicely something, at which she shook her pretty head. "Well, if I must, I must," returned her ladyship, though not at all like one who is acting compulsorily, but, on the contrary, with a bright smile that illumined her gray face as sunshine sparkles on the frost.

"You see it is not as if you and Sissy here were engaged to be married, Mr. Arthur," she

began, "in which case, you would be settling your own affairs together, without the intervention of any old woman in Christendom; but as I understand the matter, you are both as free as air, though one of you is on his probation." Here Cicely was about to interrupt, but her godmother lifted an imperious finger for silence. "I am speaking to the young gentleman," she said, "and not to you at all, miss."

"What you say is very true, Lady Layton," returned Arthur humbly, "except that my own position is not quite so good as you are pleased to describe it."

"You mean that if your happiness could be secured by your own efforts there would be no fear of your success; but that it is very doubtful, even if you do your very best in India, whether you will earn sufficient, within a reasonable time, to enable you to come home and maintain a wife in England."

"I could go out to *him*," murmured Cicely pleadingly.

"You will do nothing of the kind, miss," returned her godmother sharply. "Do you suppose that my young friend here is such a selfish wretch as to permit it?"

"Certainly not," protested Arthur. "She might be shipwrecked."

"True; as *I* was. Then you would think her dead and marry some one else."

"Never," said Arthur, confidently.

The tears came into the old lady's eyes.

"That is what *I* used to say, my dear, you remember," she murmured sadly, "and yet I did not keep my word."

Arthur did remember it, but unfortunately too late; he was vexed with himself for having inadvertently distressed her; but it was plain she was not vexed with him.

From "young sir" she had dropped quite naturally into "my young friend," and now she had called him "my dear."

"I think I will leave you two young people together," she said; then with a loving glance at Cicely, "You may tell him what you please, my darling."

"I would much rather that you stayed with us, dear godmother, and told him yourself," replied Cicely demurely.

"That is not your view, Mr. Arthur?" said the old lady smiling, for indeed the young gentleman's countenance, which had risen to "very fair" at that promise of a *tête-à-tête*, had fallen a little; "nor must you imagine that it is in reality Sissy's. She only wishes to give an old woman whom she loves, and who has few joys left her in this world, a great pleasure."

"Heaven forbid that I should hinder it, dear madam," said Arthur earnestly. He felt what he said, for the old lady interested him immensely.

"You have a kind heart, sir," said Lady Layton gently, "which makes the task that has been committed to me the more welcome. Though you have known Sissy long, I have known her longer, and

though it may seem impossible to you, I do not love her less. I have for many years lived more in the past than in the present, and quite alone. It pleased God to take my darling boy from me, and since then she has been as my own child. Having no mother it was natural that she should come to me for advice and assistance in her little troubles; but at last there came a great trouble—*you*, sir.”

Here Lady Layton shook a jewelled finger at him, and Arthur hung his head; not so low, however, but that he could see Cicely smiling benignly on him over her godmother’s chair, which kept his spirits up amazingly.

“I was horrified to find that a young man without a penny had dared to lift his eyes to my god-child. What was still worse, this gentleman did not seem inclined to bestir himself to earn a penny.”

Arthur made a movement of dissent.

“That is what I gathered, sir, from my informant, notwithstanding, you may be sure, that she made every excuse for you; you were ready to break stones in the road to win her, in England, it seemed, only stone-breaking was not a remunerative calling; but you hesitated to accept £200 a year in India with the same object.”

“It was not the going to India, madam, but the fear of losing her while I was away,” put in the young man plaintively.

“That is what you protested, of course; but I was not inclined to believe you. ‘This is in my

opinion an idle young fellow, Sissy,' I said, 'and totally unworthy of you,' on which Sissy burst into tears.

"'It is better to cry now,' said I, 'than to cry when things are past mending.' So you see, sir, I was set dead against you, and did what I could to your disadvantage."

"At *first*," observed Cicely very softly, like an explanatory chorus which has lost its voice.

"Be quiet miss," remarked the old lady reprov-
ingly. "Well, sir, my advice to Sissy was not only that she should not engage herself to you—which, indeed, she was far too wise to do—but, unless you accepted that appointment in India of your own free-will, that she should give you up. She would not express her own opinion on the matter that night at the Inventions one way or the other, you remember; but left it to your own decision, and still you hesitated, sir. Then suddenly (catching sight of me in my wheeled chair) she thought of my unhappy story, which, if read aright, though she could not plight her faith to you in so many words, it struck her might indirectly assure you of it."

"I am thankful to say it did so," murmured the young fellow.

"My experience has been a bitter one, Heaven knows, but since it has taught you wisdom, it has not been without good fruit. God bless you both!"

Arthur once more bowed his head, this time without venturing to look at Cicely; he felt somehow that some supreme moment as regarded his

future was at hand; but when he looked up again, Lady Layton had disappeared.

"You will not see her again, Arthur," said Cicely, gravely, in answer to his look of amazement. "It was only for my sake that my dear godmamma consented to see you at all; for she sees no one. If I had not been certain that she would have liked you, I would not have risked it."

"Risked it?"

"That was not perhaps the right word to use," said Cicely, blushing, "for in any case I had obtained her consent to our betrothal."

Here there was what is called in music "an interval," and it was very harmoniously spent.

"What are those papers she has left on the table, Sissy?"

"Papers? I did not know there were more than one. This is your appointment from Judge Manners, a very old friend of Lady Layton's husband."

"Judge Manners! But it was not in his gift."

"Not the Indian one. But this is a revising barristership, and she knows some 'solors.' as you call them, and promises to get you work from them besides."

"What a fairy godmother my darling has!"

"You may well say that," exclaimed Cicely, her pretty face lit up with glad surprise. "See what she has given to *me*, Arthur."

It was a deed making over to her the sum of £500 a year till the donor's death, "after which my dear godchild will be otherwise," it said, "suitably provided for."

"And did you know nothing of this?"

"Not of this, only of the other."

"I wonder why she never told you until now?"

"I think I know, my darling. She had not made up her mind until she had seen you whether you were a fit and proper person to be intrusted with such a treasure as myself. If she had had her doubts, she would have withheld her munificence, until you had passed through some period of probation; but as it is—"

"We are to be married to-morrow," interrupted Arthur rapturously.

"How can you be so foolish?"

"But that is what she means, Sissy; I don't say that she has fixed that date for the ceremony, but she wishes it to happen as soon as possible. To delay it would be an act of mutiny and ingratitude of which I cannot believe you capable, and which would be only worthy of Mr. Bates."

Moved by these and other arguments, Cicely consented to name the day, and it was not a remote one.

The only drawback to it in the young couple's eyes when it arrived was that it lacked the presence of Lady Layton, who, as they both honestly thought, was very inadequately "represented" by a magnificent diamond necklace.

"Who was that stout old gentleman, my darling," inquired the bridegroom, as they drove away for their honeymoon, "who handed you your god-mother's present? I heard him say something about being her dearest friend."

"That is the sole survivor of whom she spoke the other day. When the East India Company was dissolved, some of its naval officers took rank in the Royal Navy; and he is one of them, Admiral Conolly, C.B."

"What, Master Lewis Conolly?"

"Yes, the same, though not the same. He is the only person alive in England, save poor dear godmamma, who remembers Prince Tarilam."

THE END.

"That is the sole survivor of whom she spoke
 the other day. When the East India Company was
 dissolved, some of its naval officers took rank in
 the Royal Navy, and he is one of them. Admiral
 Connolly, C.B." "What, Master James Connolly?"
 "Yes, the same, though not the same. He is
 the only person alive in England, save poor old
 Goddard, who remembers Prince Talisman."

PRINTING OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER.

Tauchnitz Dictionaries.

- A complete Dictionary of the English and German languages for general use. By *W. James*. Thirtieth Stereotype Edition. crown 8vo sewed Mark 4,50.
- A complete Dictionary of the English and French languages for general use. By *W. James* and *A. Molé*. Thirteenth Stereotype Edition. crown 8vo sewed Mark 6,00.
- A complete Dictionary of the English and Italian languages for general use. By *W. James* and *Gius. Grassi*. Ninth Stereotype Edition. crown 8vo sewed Mark 5,00.
- A New Pocket Dictionary of the English and German languages. By *J. E. Wessely*. Fourteenth Stereotype Edition. 16mo sewed Mark 1,50. bound Mark 2,25.
- A New Pocket Dictionary of the English and French languages. By *J. E. Wessely*. Fourteenth Stereotype Edition. 16mo sewed Mark 1,50. bound Mark 2,25.
- A New Pocket Dictionary of the English and Italian languages. By *J. E. Wessely*. Eleventh Stereotype Edition. 16mo sewed Mark 1,50. bound Mark 2,25.
- A New Pocket Dictionary of the English and Spanish languages. By *J. E. Wessely* and *A. Gironés*. Eleventh Stereotype Edition. 16mo sewed Mark 1,50. bound Mark 2,25.
- A New Pocket Dictionary of the French and German languages. By *J. E. Wessely*. Fourth Stereotype Edition. 16mo sewed Mark 1,50. bound Mark 2,25.
- A New Pocket Dictionary of the Italian and German languages. By *G. Locella*. Third Stereotype Edition. 16mo sewed Mark 1,50. bound Mark 2,25.
- A New Dictionary of the Latin and English languages. Seventh Stereot. Ed. 16mo sewed Mark 1,50. bound Mark 2,25.
- A New Pocket Dictionary of the French and Spanish languages. By *L. Tolhausen*. Stereotype Edition. 16mo sewed Mark 1,50. bound Mark 2,25.
- Technological Dictionary in the French, English and German languages by *A. and L. Tolhausen*. Complete in three Parts, crown 8vo sewed Mark 26,50. Each Part separately: *French, German, English* [Third Edition, with a grand Supplement] Mark 9,50. (Grand Supplement separate Mark 1,50.) *English, German, French* [Third Edition, with a grand Supplement] Mark 9,00. (Grand Supplement separate Mark 1,00.) *German, English, French* [Second Edition] Mark 8,00.
- A Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament. By Dr. *Julius Fürst*. Fifth Edition. Translated from the German by *Samuel Davidson*. Royal 8vo sewed Mark 19,00.

Bernhard Tauchnitz, Leipzig;

And sold by all Booksellers.

F. X. BEER, Kgl. Hofbuchbinder
→ MÜNCHEN ←
Weinstrasse Nr. 18/II.



Payn, James

A prince of the blood a novel

Bd.: 2

1888

P.o.angl. 275 d-55

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11664866-6